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MARGIANA;

OR,

WIDDRINGTON TOWER.

A TALE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

—"Human life is chequer'd at the best,
And Joy and Grief alternately preside
The good and evil demon of mankind."

TRACY.

VOL. V.

LONDON:
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MARGIANA.

CHAP. I.

Mutual Forgiveness.

"WE had not been long at Windsor, when the court also removed thither; and Lord Percy renewed his solicitations—I had almost said his importunities, to procure the liberty of the Earl of March. Many of his friends tried to persuade him it would not be surprising if his anxiety proved fatal to that nobleman's life, by rendering him more than ever an object of the King's jealousy and fear; but the more pains they took to turn his thoughts from this favourite

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point, the more resolutely bent seemed he to insist upon it; while other subjects of difference, of inferior moment, exasperated him, and embittered the mind of the King.

"Some Scottish prisoners he had taken, when last in the north, were claimed by the latter; and Lord Percy, concluding his right over them was exclusive, refused to give them up. Every interview that took place, every message that was exchanged between them, produced only more glowing irritation and deeper resentment; and Hotspur's temper became at length so uncontroulable, that Lady Percy, in serious alarm, had recourse to the mediation of more temperate spirits.

"Aware of the influence that Delancey and Harold Wallop possessed over the mind of her husband, she secretly sent a messenger to London, where they still were, to entreat they would not only come to Windsor, but even take up their residence in her house

house—'And I hope,' said she to me, observing my emotion when she acquainted me with what she had done, 'that more good consequences than one will be the result. Harry's wrath, I flatter myself, may be prevented in future from boiling over in the outrageous manner it does at present; and the tedious shyness between you and Lord Delancey, which is too evidently undermining your existence, may, by some lucky chance, during the intimacy of a daily intercourse, be terminated.'

"I replied, that however anxious I might be for such an event, I must exact from her a renewal of her promise that she would not inform Delancey who the person really was that accompanied me from France; for to you, Margiana, I will own, I indulged a latent hope, that when, in the course of time, he discovered the truth, he would, while he repented his injustice, give me credit for the faith I had inviolably preserved towards his sister. A disclosure from Lady Percy would have been considered as

springing from me; and when I thought of his insulting letter, I felt too proud either to make or suffer her to make any advances."

"Ah, my dearest Genevieve," interposed Margiana, "how happened it, all this while, you never reflected, that while Ethelred was indulging an unaccountable caprice, and you was supinely giving way to your own grief, poor Arlette was, in fact, even a greater sufferer than yourself? How could you feel a friendship for her, and yet think yourself bound to observe an injunction, which consideration for her own future welfare should have made you wholly disregard?"

"I now know that I acted wrong," replied Genevieve; "and I expected the observation from you. I can only urge in my own defence, that I, at that time, made no question Lord Lothian and Arlette were married in Scotland; and when afterwards the truth was discovered, and Wallop posted down to Edinburgh, Delancey being ill, he received.

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received from Lord Lothian the most solemn assurances that he knew nothing of Lady Arlette. He then, without betraying her disguise, inquired where was the young page who had quitted my service for his? and being directed to Rothes Castle, hastened thither; but was told by an old man, of respectable appearance, that Maurice had returned to Widdrington Tower. There, indeed, he found the real Maurice; but all his endeavours to obtain intelligence of Arlette were entirely unsuccessful. On his rejoining us, he and Delancey, concerned at my distress, forbore to reproach me for my too long continued reserve; and strove to comfort themselves and me with the reflection, that Arlette's imprudence was unknown even to Lord Lothian himself. However, I am sensible my conduct exhibited the utmost want of judgment, and I have never ceased to lament it since.

"But to return:—My friend blamed me for what she called my false delicacy; yet

still relied with confidence on the good offices of Wallop, which he would have frequent opportunities of exerting, when he became an inmate in the house; and, for these reasons, as well as on account of her husband, she felt and expressed the liveliest satisfaction when, on the second day after the departure of her messenger, her two welcome guests arrived. Lord Percy was agreeably surprised by their appearance, which he believed occasioned solely by their own desire to see him; and they took care not to inform him they had been sent for as moderators, a bare suspicion of which would have enraged him past holding; though he could not, as the event has fatally proved, have been more deaf to their arguments, or more averse to pacification.

"I was unexpectedly gratified at finding Ethelred's behaviour towards myself now somewhat less distant than before. It seemed as if time had softened his prejudices against me, and even his resentment at my apparent

apparent falsehood, so awfully expressed when we parted after our last conversation. As to Wallop, he was the same kind friend as ever; and he had not been many hours at Windsor before he testified his anxiety that Ethelred and I should mutually forget every cause of complaint against each other. He took no pains to disguise his apprehensions on the score of my health; and even in Delancey's countenance I often traced a commiseration that appeared to me incompatible with the cruelty of his foregone behaviour. But all this pity was barren of effect. They both still believed I had been guilty of an attempt to deceive them, and that I continued infatuated by my partiality for Lord Lothian. Forgiveness, and even compassion, they accorded to my youth and inexperience; but it was chance alone that cleared me from the imputation of the worst of these offences.

"You will smile when you hear what a ludicrous circumstance led to that discovery I ought to have made long before,

and dispatched Wallop on a journey into Scotland.

"Delancey had for several days been indisposed, by the re-opening of the wound he had so recently received, and had been tormented with so violent a headache, that Lady Percy strictly forbade her eldest boy, and a cousin of his, who was his playmate, from diverting themselves with any noisy game in his hearing. They were very obedient to this order whenever they were in the room with us, till one evening, when, as they were sitting together in a corner, a most hot dispute arose between them, which they carried on so vehemently, that at length their mutual contradictions were bawled out in unintelligible tones of passion. Loud were their defiances, and furious their gestures, till young Percy, like a genuine Hotspur, knocked his antagonist down. His father and Wallop now interfered. The former made him beg his cousin's pardon, and the latter inquired what were the grounds of their quarrel? They

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They said it was about a story their nurse had told them the day before. 'What story was that, Harry?' said Ethelred, taking little Percy on his knee.

'Why, cousin,' replied the child, 'it was about a cat that was turned into a woman, and then changed herself into a cat back again.'

'It is very early for such little pugs as you to fight for a woman,' said Ethelred, laughing. 'Pray, how did you contrive to differ about her?'

'Why, because I said it was a true story, and William said it was not.'

'Then I am afraid, Harry, if you had the best of the battle, you had the worst of the argument. What made you fancy such a diverting little story as that could be true?'

'I think it was still, cousin Delancey, for all you can say.'

'Then I suppose you would knock me down too, if you could; for I do assure you, coz, it is not.'

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'But how do you know it is not?' said the little boy.

'Because it is impossible.'

'And why is it impossible?'

'How much faster,' observed Ethelred, 'children can ask questions than men or women can answer them! However,' pursued he, 'try to change yourself into a squirrel, Harry, and see if you can do it. If you can, I will believe your story is a true one.'

'Oh, but,' replied the child, 'that is quite different. Big people can do anything.'

'To take you in your own way, Harry, how do you know they can?'

'Oh, because I have seen them.'

'Indeed! Now you grow worth listening to! Come, let us hear what surprising things you have seen. What changes do you know of?'

'Why, I know of a caterpillar that was changed into a butterfly.'

'But a caterpillar is not one of the big people, is he, Harry?'

'No!

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'No! but I have seen a boy changed into a girl.'

'Bless my heart! where?'

'Why, here. Lady Genevieve's page was turned into a woman just after she came to us.'

'How?' exclaimed Delancey.

'Lady Genevieve's page!' cried Wallop. 'What is the meaning of this?'

'Oh,' said I, 'Harry has no meaning. How should he?'

'Forbear, dear creature,' interrupted Lady Percy. 'The hand of Providence is here. It renders this child an instrument to clear your fame from censure, and unveil the truth.'

'Be it manifested to us all then,' said Harold, 'and you are the oracle we look to. Explain, dear lady, and pity our impatience to know that Genevieve, like her sister, is incapable of error. What of this page turned woman?'

'Simply that the page was a woman,' replied Lady Percy. 'The next time you

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blame innocent people, I hope you will be better informed.'

"The two friends looked at Lord Percy. 'Why, my good fellows,' said he, 'I believe you should have known all this before; but, to own the truth, my head has been very full of other matters, and I am afraid I forgot it. However, the fact is a fact of the first certainty, that little Maurice was assuredly no other than Lady Arlette.'

"Astonishment took possession of the features of Ethelred. 'My sister!' cried he, setting down the child. 'Oh why, Lady Genevieve, was I not told of this before? What could induce you to commit such injustice against yourself and her, while you prolonged my painful anxiety? But whither did she go when she quitted your protection?'

"I hung my head at this inquiry, so difficult to reply to; and the change in Wallop's countenance encreased my perplexity, by convincing me of what I had before only suspected, that he was attached to

my

my cousin. Pressed, however, to answer, I told Lord Delancey that his sister, wishing to be with you, and believing you gone to France, had, in the disguise of your page, and under the protection of Lord Lothian, who was concealed on your account at Warkworth, pursued you thither, as she supposed; but failing to meet with you in the convent of the Ursulines, had resorted to me, whose abode in Paris she had learned from Clara Castles. 'And with me,' continued I, 'she was contented to remain, after resuming her own character, till she heard of your return to London, when a dread of your resentment, instilled into her mind by Clara's insinuations, forced her once more away. She left a letter to inform me she was going back to the Ursulines; but a proper person dispatched to overtake her, by Lord Percy, found her not either there or on the road thither.'

'And have you no suspicion,' cried Wallop, impatiently, 'which road she took? At home we know she is not. Good Heavens!

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Heavens! what hazards must she not have run, so lovely, so unprotected!'

'But she had again assumed her disguise,' replied I; 'and perhaps returned to Lord Lothian, as a certain means of immediately quitting London, and removing to a distance from her brother; for Lord Lothian was at that time on the point of setting out for Edinburgh, on business relating to his nephew. When there, no doubt she would leave him, and most likely fix on some proper place of residence.'

'Most likely!' repeated Wallop, feeling the same surprise you have just now expressed. 'Oh, Lady Genevieve, where were your prudence and your friendship for her, when you did not instantly acquaint Delancey with all you knew concerning her?'

'No more of this,' cried Ethelred. 'It may not yet be too late. She must, however, be sought after without any further waste of time. I may be some miles on my way this very night.'

"Here

"Here Wallop vehemently interposed, protesting he would himself go, instead of his friend, whose still unclosed wound would render such a hasty journey extremely hazardous; and Delancey, well knowing his sister's interests might safely be entrusted to Harold, and urgently pressed both by Lord and Lady Percy to commit the affair to him, without needlessly endangering his own safety, yielded at length to stay behind.

"Harold's preparations, you will suppose, were as rapid as anxiety and love could make them. Within the hour he set out for Edinburgh; and I have already told you the luckless result of his journey. He was above a fortnight absent; and great was our perplexity, on his return, to find the fair fugitive had not been heard of; a perplexity only equalled by that surprise we all felt at hearing she had so long and so completely deceived Lord Lothian. Our general conclusion was, that she had retired into some monastery, as a place of res-

pectable temporary shelter, and gentler captivity than the recesses of the Black Tower.

"In the meantime, Delancey's wound assuming a more favourable appearance, his health improved, and Wallop had the satisfaction of finding him considerably better than when he went away; but this was the only alteration to be discerned in Delancey. Though he never mentioned your name, it was easily perceived you was never absent from his thoughts; and towards myself his general behaviour was still reserved and distant. Civil, and even gentle, in his deportment when we met, he yet seemed to regard me as no nearer to him than a common and casual acquaintance, and hardly ever addressed himself to me upon any occasion. Lady Percy, who had believed the principal subject of difference was done away when the mystery attending the page was disclosed, became more than ever exasperated against him, and frequently urged me to drive from my thoughts an insolent

young

young man, who, she was pleased to say, deserved not the worth he despised.

"But, could I have attended to this advice, it would have been overbalanced by Wallop, who ceased not to lament our mutual estrangement, which he protested to me he was certain was the cause of extreme regret to his friend. He entered into this subject with peculiar seriousness, one evening, as we were walking together in the forest; and pressed me to acquaint him if I had any other cause of resentment against Ethelred than his late mistrust of the honour of my word?

"He looked at me, as he asked this question, with a penetrating glance, that brought the faded colour into my cheeks. 'None,' I replied, 'that I shall complain of; none that I think worth troubling you about.'

'Ah, Lady Genevieve,' cried he, 'I fear —I greatly fear——But I have no right to teize you with my conjectures; and my apprehensions would only offend you.'

'Ah

'Ah no, Wallop. All pride is dead in me now. There was a time, but it has long been over, when I was sensible of reproach and insult. At present, you would find it difficult indeed to pain me.'

'Reproach and insult? Who could offer either to you?'

'Not *you*, Wallop. Say on, therefore; I am ready to hear any thing you have to observe. What is it you conjecture? What is it you apprehend?'

'Will you not blame me, as officious and presuming, if I say, I fear your heart is so far entangled as to be utterly irrecoverable? And yet, my lovely friend, at the risk of actually giving you that pain you say you can no longer feel, I am impelled to add, that if you was aware of the pursuits in which the most dissipated of mankind is now so deeply engaged as to be wholly engrossed by them, your delicacy, as well as your tenderness, would be too much shocked to bestow—yes, I am persuaded, ever again to bestow, a thought of affec-

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tion upon him. I speak the simple truth; though, of all, or even half, the truth, it would be difficult to convey to you an idea. But every mouth at Edinburgh exclaims against the licentiousness that every day furnishes instances of. Virtuous daughters seduced, nay even the peace of married men disturbed, are mournful and revolting proofs of a disposition at once abandoned and incorrigible. How soon have the Ursulines, the wretched Clothilde, to whom reparation has been promised, and the severe punishment incurred, and so narrowly escaped from, in France, how soon have they all been forgotten! Dear, dear Lady, turn your eyes inwards on yourself, consider your own worth, so infinitely above what he can ever merit, and recal your strayed affections. The satisfaction *I* should feel is no object to dwell on, though it would be that of the sincerest of your friends; but if you have any of that regard left you once professed for Delancey, surely the pleasure you would

would impart to him might prove an incentive.'

'You are speaking of Lord Lothian,' replied I, determined at length to vindicate my own heart, though I discovered not all its emotions. 'Any disgraceful information respecting him can excite in me no surprise. What other line of conduct could be expected from a man who has never shewn better propensities?'

'None, surely,' returned Harold, in a tone of surprise. 'But, from Lady Genevieve, contempt alone, it might be presumed, would be the portion of such a character.'

'And so it is. Even while I pity Lord Lothian, as one designed by Nature for less ignoble purposes, I despise him as the slave of vicious and unbridled passion.'

'Ah, why then, for one so lost, should you abandon yourself to solitude and melancholy? Why do you not root him from your heart, and forget the worthless being you cannot esteem?'

'The

"The plant that never struck a fibre into the soil, what hand *can* unroot? It is time to undeceive you, Harold. You, in common with many others, have long cherished a mistake, the most degrading to me. You believed me early and easily attracted by the frivolous qualities of Lord Lothian, and still insult my judgment by suspecting me of attachment towards him. In return for that friendship you profess for me, and which I have no reason to doubt, you shall be the first person I undeceive upon this point. Hear me, therefore, once for all, and with the purest sincerity, declare, that for Lord Lothian I never felt an emotion of tenderness in my life! From an accidental circumstance, which I am not free to reveal, but which was wholly unconnected with a thought of love, our acquaintance first arose; and since then I have invariably reprobated his conduct, and considered his character with the same condemnation as yourself. You look incredulous; perhaps

haps you do not believe me; but why, were it false, need I make this assertion?'

'And why, if it be true, Lady Genevieve, have you concealed the truth so long?'

'To the person principally concerned it has always been known. Lord Lothian, from the first hour we met, has never believed himself the object of my partiality. Lady Percy, the friend of my heart, never thought me so lost as to love him.'

'Is it possible that you seriously say this?' interrupted Wallop. 'I can hardly persuade myself that I am awake. But why did you not long ago place the same confidence in Delancey with which you now honour me? Why do you cruelly leave him in an error, which his friendship for you renders painful?'

'Ah, Wallop, if you speak sincerely to me, you know but little of your friend. I fear he has been far from sharing your mistake. He chose a higher ground to mortify

mortify and affront me from; and now cares little whether Lord Lothian be in my thoughts or no.'

'I know not what you mean by higher ground; but of this I am certain, you materially wrong him. Only your beloved sister was dearer to his heart than yourself; and now she is gone, no other possesses in an equal degree the power of afflicting him. He is of a temper too manly, perhaps too proud, to complain even to me; but I know he suffers severely from your behaviour to him.'

'From my behaviour! Good Heavens, how otherwise than reservedly can I behave to one who affects to treat me as a stranger? Would to God I had always observed the same distance! I might then have been spared the indignity he thought proper, to overwhelm me with.'

'Indignity, Lady Genevieve! Indignity from Ethelred you not any one ever received. I challenge the whole world to bring forward

forward a proof of unmerited insult from him.'

'Yet what, alas, had *I* done to merit it? A sister might have conducted herself, might have conversed with, might almost have thought of him as I did. No, Harold, Delancey was cruel and unjust; and is now probably, as you observe, too proud to confess that his conscience reproaches him for what is past.'

'Why should it reproach him? What offence has he committed, unless anxiety for your welfare be a crime? When you abruptly quitted his protection, to throw yourself ostensibly on that of Lord Lothian, for whom he had no reason to doubt your previous regard, what man, more especially what kinsman, would not have felt the indignity offered to *him* as he did? And yet *you* can talk of being treated with contempt and insult! Excuse my warmth, Lady Genevieve, but such accusations no one should urge without proof; and proof you have

have none. From the blame that attached to you on account of the page, then apparently in Lord Lothian's service, you are cleared, and, I grieve to add, at Arlette's expence; but why your resentment should outlive the error you took no pains to remove, I know not.'

'I think not of that error,' replied I, 'and with readiness own I was wrong in not discovering it sooner. But surely you are unacquainted with some particulars of Lord Delancey's conduct. Had I, without provocation, quitted Paris, instead of awaiting his return, not even *he* should have been more prompt to censure me than myself. But driven as I was with heaped opprobrium from him—Oh, spare me the mortifying subject! Though it is ever present to my thoughts, I cannot bear to talk of it.'

'What opprobrium?' cried Harold. 'What is this fancied insult you dwell on so intensely? It is not in Ethelred's nature to wound the feelings of any one, of a lady more especially.'

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'And yet, was it likely such a letter as he wrote to me should not wound mine severely?'

'What letter? When?'

'Then I *was* right, when I supposed you unacquainted with it. Now learn, that this most faultless Ethelred, this kind cousin, this anxious friend, so solicitous for my welfare, so tender of my feelings, when he quitted Paris, had the cruelty to leave behind him a letter for me, wherein he reproached me for the testimonies of my innocent affection for *himself*, and bade me avoid and never see him more. Ah,' pursued I, crying bitterly, 'too well he knew Lord Lothian was nothing to me. But a word, a look, would have sufficed to have driven me away. There was no need of such harshness and contempt.'

"Wallop interrupted me with impatience. 'There must be some accursed mistake in this,' said he. 'No human being shall persuade me Delancey could write a letter of the kind. Such indelicacy and arrogance

are

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are as remote from his nature as murder and rapine.'

'I will leave it to your own senses to persuade you,' replied I, drying my tears. 'I have the letter here, though not about me at this moment, and you shall see it.'

'Agreed, Lady Genevieve! And if I can prove it a forgery, remember, every subject of difference between you and Delancey is done away.'

"I shook my head in silence; and during the rest of our walk, Wallop fully employed himself in breathing imprecations against the wretch, whoever he might be, that had fabricated such a misunderstanding between us.

"The instant we returned to the house, he urged me to shew him this fatal letter without delay; and I was persuaded the sight of it would convince him, as it had done myself; but, on the contrary, he strenuously insisted it was a forgery. Comparing it with some of Ethelred's writing which happened to lie in his way, he

pointed out to me several differences of character, obvious enough; yet still, desirous as I was of removing from my mind the heavy load that had so long oppressed it, I could not think they substantiated the fact he would establish. He was exasperated at my adherence to my former opinion, and passionately vowed he would not restore the letter, nor suffer me to leave him, till he had shewn it to Ethelred, and had thoroughly convinced me how much I had wronged him. 'Go,' said he, calling a servant, 'go and tell Lord Delancey I would speak with him immediately.'

'Oh no, no,' I cried, struggling in an agony of distress to get from him, 'not for the whole world! I would not be confronted with him on such a subject, to save my existence. Inhuman friend! would you have him repeat to my face the affronts he has penned?'

'He never penned them!' exclaimed Wallop. 'Unless you forged the letter yourself, you have nothing to fear. If he wrote

wrote a line of that infernal scroll, I will consent to lose my life the next moment. Be calm; you may as well, for I shall not let you go. This vile quarrel has been drawn out to too great a length already, and another hour shall not pass without every cause of it being removed. Fear me not; I will say nothing that can wound you. I will be as careful as if you was my sister.'

"The entrance of Lord Delancey prevented his saying more to me; yet he still held my arm.

'My dear Ethelred,' said he, 'you know how long I have grieved at the shyness subsisting between you and your cousin. It is one of the first wishes of my heart to see it terminated; and, to that end, I have been endeavouring to obtain some lights as to its cause. A letter, I find, has given great and just offence. Now, I am extremely anxious to prove that letter the work of some concealed enemy, and I hope you will be able to assist me in the attempt.'

'A letter was indeed written,' replied

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Ethelred; 'but say not it offended. There was no right to take offence. The same officiousness that occasioned it, deserved it also.'

'How!' cried Wallop, 'Do you own it?'

'Indeed I do; though at the same time I must acknowledge Lady Genevieve was the very last person from whom I should have expected it.'

'Gracious Heaven!' interrupted I, roused into exertion by this strangely repeated charge—'of what officiousness had I been guilty? When you was ill, indeed, I thought a sister's care became me; but surely, otherwise——'

'You mistake me,' said Ethelred, interrupting me in his turn. 'The officiousness was mine. The cold, the insulting letter you sent me, was the punishment it justly merited.'

'D—n your blunders!' cried Wallop. 'I say what letter? Lady Genevieve wrote none to you.'

'I thought

'I thought you mentioned it just now, as the origin of all this concern,' replied Ethelred, coolly.

'Here are cross-purposes, with a vengeance! But why, when we can come to the point at once, should we stand blinking at it from a distance? Let us understand each other fairly.—Here,' proceeded Wallop, producing it as he spoke, 'here is the letter to which I alluded. Did you, Lord Delancey, write this sublime composition?'

"Ethelred took it, cast his eye over, and then returned it, with an unchanged countenance. 'I did,' answered he, 'but how came you by it?'

'You did!' exclaimed Wallop; 'and can acknowledge it with an unblushing forehead! Oh, for shame, for shame! Was this a letter to write to a woman?'

'Yes, if that woman deserved it. You force from me expressions it is extremely irksome to make use of; but if the forwardness of her behaviour was such as.

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yielded to no gentler means of repression; if, notwithstanding the constant coldness she met with, she persisted to obtrude her unwelcome partiality upon me, and in defiance of the contempt, nay even the aversion, I took no pains to conceal——'

'Look, look to Lady Genevieve!' cried Wallop; for my heart at these words seemed dying within me, and I was sinking to the ground. 'Inhuman monster! what madness possesses you, thus to accuse a woman whose modesty was never yet excelled? Bear up, sweet Lady! let me lead you to your chamber. This is the last time you shall be insulted by him. Forgive me for having now occasioned you this distress.'

'Genevieve,' said Delancey, endeavouring to take my hand, 'this is very unaccountable. Why should you interest yourself so deeply in an affair I hoped had never come to your knowledge? Why should you grieve——'

'Then there is some mistake after all!' interrupted Wallop, impetuously. 'Did you

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you not own you wrote that letter to Lady Genevieve?'

'To Lady Genevieve! Heaven forbid! I wrote it to Clara Castles, after I had informed her uncle where she was, and had recommended him to place her again in the convent, finding how extremely improper so unprincipled and intriguing a young woman was to be the companion of my cousin after I had left Paris.'

'Thank God!' cried Wallop. 'Hear this, Lady Genevieve, and extend your hand to the man whom we have both of us injured by our suspicions.'

"I was so delighted, so overpowered with joyful sensations, that I had not presence of mind enough to utter a sentence, and could only once or twice exclaim, 'Oh, Delancey!' as I sat down breathless on a seat that Wallop drew beside me. Ethelred, pressing my hand to his lips, asked by what machination a paper addressed to Clara had fallen into my possession, as if intended for me? And on my

at length informing him that it had been delivered to me by the French servant whom a friend of Clara's had recommended to my service, he observed the imposition had been but too easy for one of her plotting genius. 'But to what end,' said he, 'could Clara have wished to create estrangement between us?'

'The end is obvious enough,' replied Harold. 'Enraged at finding you would not love herself, she was resolved, if possible, to prevent your loving any other; and knowing Margiana to be dead, she naturally concluded her sister the most likely to succeed her in your affections.'

'My dearest cousin,' said Ethelred, tenderly embracing me, 'this explanation cannot give more pleasure to you than it does to myself. I have been most sensibly affected by the alteration in your behaviour towards me, and rejoice to find it so accounted for. You would not have been the modestly dignified character I always thought you, had you resented such an of-

fence

fence in any slighter degree; and your letter, which stung me to the heart, was nothing more than what such a puppy as you believed me to be deserved.'

'I wrote you no letter, my Lord. If you received one from me, some second imposition must have been practised.'

'Surely not, my dear Genevieve. It was in your handwriting, and was what I should richly have merited, had I addressed the other to you.'

'And when did you receive it, my Lord?'

'Your French maid delivered it to me when I returned to Paris from the Provinces, and, to my extreme astonishment, found you gone.'

'And can I see the letter? It must be a spurious one, for I never wrote you a line. Can you shew it to me?'

'No; but I can repeat it. I believe I recollect every word.'

'Repeat it then,' said Wallop.

'I was informed you had written it on

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the morning of your departure, which took place immediately after you had been waited upon by a page belonging to Lord Lothian. It ran thus:

'I AM forced to inform you I should be sorry either to delay or to hasten your departure from this country, or indeed to give you any trouble beyond this letter. Your time is your own, and I have no right or desire to engross any part of it, as I hope, when I return to England, to travel under the protection of one whom I can with more pleasure, as well as more propriety, confide in.'

'Alas,' cried I, 'what wickedness has been put in practice to ruin me in your opinion! I addressed the lines you have repeated to William Scroope, in consequence

quence of an offer he made me, perhaps well meant, but of a boldness that I thought required some check. He wrote me a proposal of accompanying me to England, in case I wished to leave France without waiting for your return; and this answer I ordered the same perfidious woman to remit to him, the next time he visited at the house. You now perceive I was far from alluding to Lord Lothian in that letter. Good God! what contempt should I not justly have incurred, could I have made use of such expressions to you! Well might you deprive me of a friendship I appeared so incapable of appreciating!'

"Ethelred was preparing to make some reply, when Harold prevented him, by saying, 'I perceive Lady Genevieve is not to be trusted to be her own advocate. She stops after a simple explanation of this fact, without vindicating herself from the disgrace attributed to her, of having made an unworthy choice. Till within this hour, as you did, I believed her affections had always been

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been bestowed on Lord Lothian; but she has just now condescended to undeceive me in that particular. And why,' pursued he, turning to me, 'should Ethelred be denied the pleasure which one so sincerely your friend must receive from the communication?'

'Indeed,' said I, 'Lord Lothian neither is, nor ever was, more to me than an object of the most perfect indifference. I never heard an intimation to the contrary, without feeling ashamed of being so ill thought of; and to partiality, I doubt not, has often been attributed the very confusion that arose from so opposite a motive.'

'I am extremely happy to hear you say this,' replied Lord Delancey, 'and I give your assurance the most implicit credit. In fact, I must do my own penetration the justice to observe, that I had long suspected the world wronged you by the supposition, till this treacherous contrivance at Paris overturned all my endeavours to believe you indifferent to the libertine.

Of

Of Clara, my opinion was never very favourable; but I was far from thinking her capable of such wicked perfidy as this. No wonder, therefore, I implicitly submitted to the deception; and believing myself hated, and Lothian beloved, determined never to importune you more. Even the regret I felt on my return to London, at the sight of your altered looks, was half-stifled by the consideration that you suffered for *him*, and mourned the baseness of his recent conduct in the monastery. But suffer me to ask, how happened you, my dear Genevieve, to receive a person nominally in his service, and so abruptly to quit the protection of the Queen?'

'I consented to see the page, whom my vile servant represented as very desirous of speaking to me, because I had really no grounds for denying his request. His supposed master had always behaved with the utmost propriety to me; and I am sure never felt any partiality for me, but what simply arose from being dear Margiana's sister.

sister. Except when he expressed his passion for her, I had never heard a word of love from his lips; and therefore a refusal to hear any message he sent would have been unwarranted ill manners. With respect to my sudden journey, my Lord, you have only to call to mind some sentences in that cruel letter, which was brought to me the morning after your sister's appearance. I can repeat them, Heaven knows, without referring to the writing.—*You must quit a house where you are so improperly an inmate. Retire to where your example cannot be contagious. For your sake, as well as my own, I hope we shall never meet again.* Your hand was so artfully imitated on the back of the letter, I had no idea of any deception; and you cannot be surprised if my first and only thought was instantly to obey the peremptory mandate.'

'How ably the baggage contrived to revenge herself of your coldness!' cried Wallop. 'You see what love will do, and how

how dangerous it is to offend a lady who is infected with it.'

'It has done, in this case,' answered Ethelred, 'all that hatred could have effected. However, Clara was much beholden to chance and my sister's strange folly, for the accomplishment of her scheme.'

"I told Ethelred she was less indebted to chance respecting Arlette than he imagined; and, if possible, raised his indignation, by acquainting him of her so artfully sending his sister to me in the quality of Lord Lothian's page, and prepossessing her with the fear of his anger, that, by avoiding him, all chance might be precluded of a discovery of the deception.

'What a world of ingenious trick,' exclaimed Harold, 'has exercised her fertile genius, to make you two hate one another! No doubt she must have been afraid of your both admitting a very different sentiment.'

'Would to Heaven,' said Delancey, 'her fears

fears were well founded respecting us both!'

"I coloured, from the consciousness that Clara had indeed suspected me upon very sure grounds, and from the emotion that Ethelred's words excited in my bosom. I found my confusion was so apparent, that I hastily quitted the two friends, to impart my felicity to Lady Percy, whose joy at finding Lord Delancey blameless, and our quarrel at an end, proved her to be indeed the warm-hearted friend I always had reason to esteem her.

"Our next general meeting was a renewal of congratulations, oddly intermixed with the wrathful phrases and curious epithets sported by the worthy Harold, who declared, that, next to the revival of his beloved friend, meaning you, sister, and the recovery of Arlette, nothing could have given him such true pleasure as the reconciliation that had just taken place, and the exposure of the young Jezebel, as he called Clara Castles.

'I fear

'I fear poor Scroope,' said he, 'will soon discover he has drawn a sorry lot; for she little deserved that Ethelred should enable her to marry the honest lad.'

"His friend declared he rejoiced that transaction was concluded before the recent discovery had been made, confessing he should scarcely afterwards have been capable of the effort. And then it was I learned that the generous Ethelred had removed from Scroope that poverty which had been his only crime in the eyes of Clara's uncle. I leave you to judge whether it did not raise him in my opinion; or, rather, to speak wholly without reserve, whether he became not now nearer to me than ever.

"Perhaps he grew sensible of this. Perhaps what I had undergone on his account touched him with pity, or my faded form created an interest in his breast, which all I had ever been praised for of beauty had failed to excite. The most probable conjecture is, that being quite bereft of all hope

hope of your existence, and indifferent to the whole world beside, he turned his thoughts on me, who had been the nearest and dearest to you. I am unable to say by which, or if by any, of these motives he was influenced; but he now took every opportunity of bestowing upon me all those nameless attentions which are usually meant as precursors of an avowal of love.

"The restored tranquillity of my mind had its due effect on my hitherto fluctuating health; and, but for the recollection of your supposed dreadful fate, I might say more of happiness was crowded into the ensuing six weeks, than I had ever known during the whole of my preceding life. Had my heart not been before Delancey's, it would now have been assuredly won by the manly tenderness he shewed, and the preference he protested no other after your loss, could have excited.

"Very soon after the double deception of the letters was revealed, he spoke to Lady Percy

Percy to engage her interest with me in his behalf; which she frankly, too frankly, told him she believed was unnecessary. 'If your own merit,' said she, 'has not already secured you an interest in Genevieve's bosom, it must needs be as insensible as was that of her sister; and surely such indifference cannot have pervaded two of the same house.'

'Upon this he declared himself to me; but I am inclined to think he was too well aware of my sentiments to need such encouragement; and only spoke to Lady Percy from delicacy, that he might *appear* to have doubts of obtaining my favour. I endeavoured to answer him without affectation, and candidly said, that if my uncle shewed no averseness to the union, he was the person whom I should prefer to all others for the companion of my future life. He immediately took active measures for obtaining a dispensation for our marriage from the legate; and talked of a journey to Wildrington Tower, to apprise his

his father of all that had passed, and procure his consent. But Wallop, whose joy rendered him almost a lunatic, and Lady Percy, whose fears on my account, of any reverse, made her anxious for all the precipitation possible, overruled my endeavours to promote this latter measure; and each of them so strenuously represented the hazard of reopening Delancey's wound, the certainty of Lord Widdrington's approbation, and how much more advisable it would be for us to conclude the affair at once, and then go down together, finally to settle in the north, that Ethelred suffered himself to be persuaded by their arguments. But I could not reconcile myself to the impropriety of marrying him without even his father's knowledge; and therefore he took the opportunity of writing to him by a messenger who was going down to Alnwick Castle, to acquaint him that, at length, his long favourite wish of a nearer connexion with one of his nieces was likely to be fulfilled, by my consent to bestow on him my hand.

"I wished

"I wished, to await the return of this messenger, whose absence was not expected to outlast fourteen days; but I was so pressingly urged not to delay much beyond that time, in case he should be detained, that on the twentieth following his departure, he not having since been heard of, I was united to the most beloved and most amiable of human beings; a fortnight after which, we learned that the poor fellow who had been charged with the dispatch to Lord Widdrington, having fallen in with a party of hot-headed Yorkshiremen, who reproached him with the fluctuating principles of his masters, the Lords of the house of Percy, a quarrel had ensued, wherein he had been slain; so that the news of our marriage had not yet reached Northumberland; and I urged Delancey that we might, without delay, prepare to carry the intelligence of it ourselves. He was equally desirous of paying this mark of respect to his father, and assured me no consideration should withhold him after he had executed some

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some orders of the King, which must of necessity take him into Herefordshire.

"But this journey, short as it was, proved a very unfortunate one; for the exertion of travelling on horseback produced the effect that had been so long apprehended; and his wound, after he had rode about forty miles on his return, became so troublesome as to hinder his proceeding. A groom of Lord Percy's, who had attended him, came forward to bring us this information, lest his delay might create more uneasiness than the occasion really called for. However, my fears were too much awakened not to hasten to him at Painswick, where he had halted, and where, accompanied by a surgeon of eminence from London, I found him seriously ill, from a cause that had not been suspected before. The wound, which was in his shoulder, had been prevented from healing kindly, owing to a loose splinter of bone which ought, in the first instance, to have been extracted, and which the surgeon

surgeon who went with me now very skilfully removed. But the fever in the mean time, had considerably gained ground, and it was several weeks before he was permitted to resume his journey.

When he did resume it, we returned to London, not only to avoid the inconvenience of the cross-roads to Northumberland, but also that we might have the company of our kind friends, who had delayed their own removal thither purposely to travel with us. But no sooner had we reached the metropolis than new troubles once more raised a bar to our leaving it.

Owen Glendower's preparations became publicly spoken of; and it was the wish of the King, since Lord Widdrington was in readiness on his own domains to call forth his vassals in case of need, that Delancey and Harold Wallop should continue near himself, knowing how entirely he could depend on the celerity of their motions, and the fidelity of their attachment.

"Some time after, Lord Percy, to avoid involving his friends, set out to join his father, without acquainting them either with his journey or its intent; and the next report we heard was, that the Earl of Northumberland and he had openly erected the standard of rebellion.

"The distress of my amiable friend, upon this occasion, was so extreme, that finding her determined to join her husband, in case he should actually repair to Wales, it became my earnest wish not to leave her; by gratifying which I could also continue near Delancey, who, should the revolt become more serious, was to meet a powerful body of his father's vassals in the county of Derby, and proceed at their head to the fatal scene of action. He entirely approved my adherence to Lady Percy; and I need not tell you the event. He set forward from London, cruelly pained by the defection of his ambitious friend, but confident of the success of the royal party. I have never

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never beheld him since. Heaven grant us all a joyful meeting when this eventful day is past! though I confess I anticipate, with a pleasure not wholly unmixed with uneasiness, the astonishment and the *sort* of sensation he will feel at the unexpected sight of you."

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CHAP. II.

Vaulting Ambition that o'erleaps itself.

MARGIANA tenderly embraced her sister at the conclusion of her narrative, and said every thing in her power to re-assure her on the score of her husband's fixed affections, without advancing a single argument that was not founded on the surest grounds —her own knowledge of his high sense of duty and moral rectitude, and the charms of Genevieve herself, who was, if possible, more delicately beautiful than ever.

Margiana's modest opinion of her own attractions made her suppose it very easy for

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for a lover to forget her; and while she always remembered that Genevieve was more critically handsome than herself, she never recollected the peculiar advantages she possessed, of a different and a superior nature; namely, an easy yet diffident grace, that communicated charms to every action; a mingled expression of sense and sweetness beaming through large dark eyes, over the most intelligent countenance in the world; a form less fragile and more finely proportioned than her sister's; and a dignified innate affability of manner, that spoke her mindful of the ease and happiness of all around her, while she seemed utterly regardless of herself. Those who knew her intimately added to the account of these external attractions, an understanding of the first order, as much cultivated as the confined knowledge of the period she lived in allowed it to be; and a temper so cheerful as to defy all personal vexation. In a friend's cause, Margiana could be irritated, but not in her own. Her unaffected for-

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titude in suffering, when no eye but that of Heaven beheld her, has been seen; and she was as steady in the performance of what she knew to be right, as quick in discriminating the fit and unfit, at the first view of any difficult situation.

Genevieve, who was of a much more common character, looked up to her with a deference that Margiana never would receive as her due, and which often pained her; and the fond wife of Delancey thought, with an indescribable emotion, of his probably approaching meeting with the woman to whom he had been so strongly and so long attached, and of her own conscious inferiority in those points to which she believed he affixed the highest value.

Nor was this her most serious cause of apprehension. Should that meeting never take place! should the last day of Ethelred's existence, as well as that of so many other brave men, be arrived!—But Genevieve rejected

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rejected this idea with horror and a sinking heart.

Lady Percy, though equally a prey to the most tormenting apprehensions, yet strove to command herself, and to meet her friends with an appearance of serenity very foreign to her heart. Her Lord, after having with difficulty been persuaded to repose for a few hours, had taken a hasty but affectionate leave of her, and had repaired to join the other leaders of his party, for the purpose of making every proper arrangement for the important day that was now arrived; a day that was either to overwhelm the noble house of Percy in ruin, or to lift it to a rank second only to royalty, by placing the young Earl of March upon the throne; a day that was to confirm or to terminate the sovereignty of Henry Bolingbroke.

Hotspur, ardent for war, and rash to the [redacted] last moments of his existence, had

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disdained the counsels of the more aged and temperate of his partisans, who advised him to wait for the arrival of Glendower and his forces, who might hourly be expected, before he hazarded an engagement. Their absence, and the illness of his father, were disadvantages which, while he admitted their force, were without power to curb his headstrong valour; and he determined to give battle to the royal army, though it had been strengthened the day before by the King, at the head of a formidable body of men. All hopes of an accommodation had vanished on the return of Lord Percy's uncle, the Earl of Worcester, from the camp of the sovereign, whose gracious promise to redress the grievances he had been sent to complain of, and to grant the malcontents a general pardon, provided they would lay down their arms, had been concealed by that perfidious traitor. Hotspur, enraged at the haughty answer he had been led to believe the King had returned by his uncle, boiled with impatience for the onset, and

his

his impetuosity was encreased by the fiery spirit of his friend in arms, the gallant Douglas. Even the most moderate now acknowledged with a sigh that only bloodshed could terminate the quarrel.

Commanded by the King himself, who was assisted by the two eldest Princes, whom he had joined the preceding day, the royal army, without any further attempt at conciliation, was suffered to advance to a large plain, not more than half a mile distant from the house where Lady Percy was. The rebels awaited them in good order, and with determined hearts, save only the Earl of Widdrington, whose spirit shrunk within him, and whose arm was unnerved. His son and Harold Wallop were amongst the opposing numbers, and marched near to the Prince of Wales.

Neither of them had been able to send more than a short and hasty message to their lovely anxious friends; though Delancey

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had already been made acquainted by Harold of his own joyful surprise at finding Margiana alive. His delight from this source, joined to his consternation at the unexpected and unaccountable defection of his father, and his dread of lifting his arm against a parent's life, filled the soul of Ethelred with such a conflict of emotions, as might have deprived many men of the presence of mind necessary on such an occasion; but he struggled to subdue his feelings, or at least to direct their energy solely to the momentous business of the day. "We will keep near to each other, and to the Princes," said he, "that we may be at hand to give assistance if needed, either mutually or to them. If we fall in the performance of our duty, we shall leave a good name behind us. If we survive the bloody work of this day, there will be time enough to think and talk of those we love. My most anxious wishes, next to the desire of victory, are, that we may see my father fighting on our side before the battle is over,

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over, and that Henry Percy may be taken by some noble hand, unhurt by your's or mine."

Lord Delancey's messenger found Margiana, Genevieve, and Lady Percy, already apprised that an immediate action was inevitable; and it required all the fortitude of the former to controul her own strong agitation, while she endeavoured to compose that of her friends. Lady Percy, tremblingly alive for the safety of her husband and her brother, had ordered various menials to station themselves in different quarters of the field of action, that they might bring her instant intelligence of every turn in the fortune of the day; and while she and Lady Genevieve counted the moments in anxious suspense, the attentive and useful kindness of Margiana strove insensibly to draw them into a conversation, calculated to engage their minds and interest their curiosity. She led them to speak of Alnwick Castle and Widdrington

Tower; and then fell into a narrative of those circumstances which, occurring to herself at the latter place, had, at the time they happened, appeared to her unaccountable. She related the alarm occasioned to her by the first mysterious appearance of the cloaked figure issuing from behind the arras of her gloomy chamber, the terror which induced her to fly into the great hall for shelter, and the ineffectual search made by her uncle and Scruton; the singular address which she found inclosed in the book of Italian tales, and her irresolution whether or not to attend to the request of the unknown to meet him in the vaults of the castle.

Here Margiana paused, for she saw the attention of her sister was arrested.

"Well," said Genevieve, "and is it possible you had resolution to go?"

"Something more than curiosity," replied Margiana, "proved a strong incentive;

tive, yet the apprehension of some snare, and an unaccountable dread of Scrutton, deterred me, till the return of Lord Delancey and Harold Wallop from London." She then recounted their fruitless night-watches, and in particular that wherein she herself had accompanied them, when the cloak had been found. Even Lady Percy became interested in her story. She passed rapidly forward, and spoke of the second invitation, many months after, to the burying-place; and her auditors were agreeably surprised to find that Kendrew was the man whom she had wished, yet feared to meet.

"I little thought," observed Genevieve, "that our old servant had been so long hovering near us; yet I am persuaded he is the person whom once I met in the passage leading to the armoury. I happened to be alone, and was moving slowly forward, with a lamp in my hand, when a figure, such as you describe, cautiously advanced. I saw him not, however, till he was very near me. He then held up his hand

hand as if to stop me, but without speaking; and immediately raised my arm which bore the light, till its rays beamed on my face. But he instantly suffered it to drop, and with a heavy sigh turned from me, and instantly disappeared.

"Another time I was yet more alarmed. Joyce was with me. My fright proceeded from a different person. At the top of a pair of backstairs we heard a lumbering noise, as of people ascending, bearing a weighty load. Joyce herself seemed ignorant of the cause, and listened with surprise and attention. At length, three servants of the castle appeared, bearing amongst them a heavy man, who groaned as if he had been severely hurt. One of the domestics, perceiving Joyce, called to her, and begged her attention for Father Geoffry, who had been almost murdered. On her approaching him, I followed; but while she was answering the man, the friar, observing me, clenched his fists, and speaking through his shut teeth, prayed a curse from

from Heaven upon all our race. I was inexpressibly shocked and terrified; and esteemed such a denunciation, from a person whom I had always considered as a holy character, as an evil of very serious import. He was proceeding to imprecate the villain who had reduced him to his state of suffering, when Joyce, suddenly turning round, and catching his broken sentence, impetuously struck her hand upon his mouth, to check his unguarded expressions. She then laid hold of my arm, and hurried me away."

"And was that all you ever knew of particular concerning Father Geoffry?" asked Margiana, interested now in her turn by this mention of the friar.

"Had *you* ever reason to suspect any mystery relating to him?" said Genevieve, eluding, as Margiana fancied, her question.

The latter hesitated. She did not like to reveal what she had seen above the brown tapestry chamber, nor of the iron cage, nor the contents of the paper she had found there.

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there. Diverting, therefore, the discourse—"I heard a dreadful noise," replied she, "one night, as of a person knocked down, near the armoury door, and severely wounded." But here she stopt, afraid of saying too much.

"There have been unaccountable stories respecting Widdrington Tower, and particularly concerning Lady Rachel," observed Lady Percy; "and Wallop, I know, has strange surmises. But you are not like the vulgar, ready to give credit to any marvellous tale. The most surprising circumstance of all, seems to me to be Lord Widdrington's recent change, for which neither my Lord nor Wallop can possibly assign any reason."

"I am inclined to believe your brother is acquainted with the true one," said Margiana; "and powerful it must needs be, since he appeared to rely, all the way as we journeyed from Northumberland, on possessing unbounded influence over the future conduct of my uncle."

"Gracious

"Gracious Heaven!" interrupted Genevieve, shuddering, "should the father and son meet in arms, without recognising each other! Should either fall by the other's sword, and my unhappy Ethelred or Lord Widdrington—Alas, either way the horrid thought is torture."

"Fear not, dearest sister," cried Margiana; "is not Wallop there? And where he is, does not good inevitably ensue, as Lady Percy once before assured you? Will he not, think you, be mindful to prevent——"

At that moment, one of the servants who had been posted to bring information from the field, presented himself before his Lady.

"I bring you good tidings," he exclaimed, without waiting to be questioned. "Though the King's horsemen have gained a slight advantage over ours, his foot are nearly cut to pieces. My Lord calls aloud for the

the Prince of Wales in every quarter; but the Prince will be a bold man if he dares to face him. My Lord and the Earl of Douglas breathe slaughter and vengeance; and the young Lord March has fought nobly."

He was proceeding, when another messenger arrived. He was an old man, grown grey in the service of the Percy family. All were attentive on his entrance, and the first comer observed a profound silence. He was ordered to sit down, for he appeared spent and breathless; but his smile forbade all apprehensions.

When he was sufficiently recovered to speak, "The Earl of Widdrington and his son have met," said he.

Genevieve clasped her hands together, and Margiana gazed at him with keen attention.

"Father

"Father of Mercies!" cried the former, "did they know each other in time?"

"Your uncle did not know his son till all was over," replied the old man.

Genevieve covered her face, shrieking, and Margiana sunk down upon a seat.

"Till his life was in safety," pursued the old man, "he was ignorant to whom he owed it."

"What was *over*, then?" said Lady Percy, impatiently.

"The danger, Lady."

"Fie, good old Reginald! how could you thus alarm Lady Delancey? Then Lord Widdrington and his son are both safe?"

"Both, Lady. But the Earl is taken prisoner, and safely they will keep him, no doubt."

Genevieve, now relieved from her terrors, asked how the affair had passed; and what

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what were the circumstances to which the old man had alluded?

"Why, Lady," replied he, "saving your presence, and with reverence be it spoken, my Lord your uncle did not seem over-fond of being in the thickest of the fight; for he kept aloof, and was shy; and his shyness was noticed. However, our brave Lord said nothing to him, for the sake of his son, I guess. But Sir Hugh Mortimer, as I heard, sent a message to him, to look to himself, and lay about him a little more cordially, or he might chance to repent it, since both Lord March and himself kept a strict watch over him. So with that, it seems the old Earl grew more brisk; but still belike was afraid of meeting his son. However, he met with a worse than him, for he fell in with Prince John of Lancaster, who knew him, and mauled him handsomely, and would have taken him alive, but he refused to give up his sword, and though he was wounded, fought on; so that the young Prince, finding

ing all would not do; but that he must be forced to aim at his life, raised his arm to cut him down, which he might have done at one stroke; when just at that very point of time stepped a young warrior, who received the blow on his shield, and besought him to spare the Earl of Widdrington. He afterwards discovered himself to be Lord Delancey; and then his father was so much affected that he surrendered himself a prisoner to the Prince, and was carried away to the Prince's tent, where his son gave orders to have his wound immediately dressed, and then returned to the field, where he and Harold Wallop, God wot! make as sore destruction on their side as our gallant young Lord and Earl Douglas do on ours. Marry! the King's forces turn pale when they hear the cry of Esperance! and see the flash of Harry Hotspur's sword."

"Thank Heaven for this good news!" said Genevieve, "and grant we hear none worse to-day."

Lady

Lady Percy congratulated her friends on the safety of their uncle, whose captivity they could not lament, and on the honour which his son had acquired by protecting him; but neither Margiana nor Genevieve herself perceived any thing more in his action than a simple performance of his duty.

The succeeding reports brought by Lady Percy's messengers continued to be for some time equally favourable with the former. She received repeated assurances that her Lord was unhurt, and that the advantage was rather on the rebel than the royal side; though Genevieve also had the delight to hear that Ethelred still fought without a wound. But, towards the afternoon, old Reginald, whose anxiety had again carried him to the bloody scene, returned with a face of more apprehension than he had shewn before.

In fact, the impetuous valour of the King's horse, commanded by the Prince of Wales,

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Wales, with Lord Delancey and Harold Wallop beside him, bore down all opposition. The former of these young heroes had as eagerly sought to oppose his arm against that of Henry Percy as he had himself been sought by him; and twice they had met, but as often been parted by the multitude, that bore them forward in different directions.

Owing to the same irresistible rushing of numbers, Lord Delancey had been separated from his friend; and while he still continued near the Prince of Wales, Wallop had been forced by the pressure of some of his own party to a spot where report led him to believe Owen Glendower was approaching with his Welchmen. To find and subdue *him*, therefore, became now the object of Harold's ardent hopes; for his heart revolted against the idea of raising his sword against the Earl of Percy; and on his and Glendower's life he was aware the success of the rebels wholly depended. Several he took

took for this haughty chief, whose existences were forfeited to his mistake; but still the real Glendower was far from him, and unhurt. Harold called him by name; but his voice vainly sounded.

Meantime Hotspur, who in one quarter saw his troops giving way before a throng of horsemen, flew like lightning to their assistance, and gave proofs of the most mad and desperate courage. As he called Esperance, and rushed onwards, his followers seemed to catch the blaze of fury that warmed him; and certain at length that he beheld the Prince of Wales in the person of the opposing leader, he called on him with a triumphant shout, as if he had already obtained a victory over him. He was heard by Henry Monmouth, and hailed with a cry as triumphant as his own. That moment they met; and Welcome, welcome, Harry! was the greeting that broke from either chief.

Delancey

Delancey instantly recognised one of the dearest of his friends; and turning away with horror, his conscience not daring to offer any defence, he left him to the royal arm, while he lifted his own against two other foes; one of whom he knew to be Douglas. The "tug of war" ensued singly between them for several minutes; nor, till the Scot gave way, did his companion approach to defend him. When he did, his voice proclaimed the Earl of March; but he was instantly met, and challenged by a chief, who suddenly advancing to Ethelred's side, followed by an aged warrior, whose grey hairs were discernible beneath his helmet, bade him be of good cheer; for two friends were at hand, who would risk their lives for the cause he was engaged in.

"The best cause here," cried the old warrior, "is a bad one; but if you be Lord Delancey, I will die ere I see you hurt."

While this was passing, the Prince of Wales and Lord Percy, still fighting with the fury of men who contended for a kingdom, had insensibly moved onwards to a trifling distance; but Delancey, watchful over the Prince's life, invited Douglas to follow. Before, however, either of them could reach the enraged combatants, the gallant but ill-advised Hotspur had expiated the offence of his rashness and revolt The star of Henry Monmouth prevailed, and his sword reached the heart of this noble rebel, who died tortured rather by the pang which the recollection of his ruined party inflicted, than by the personal anguish he endured.

His fall was seen by many, and his armour and the motto on his shield made him known to all. The news, so fatal to one party, so encouraging to the other, flew swift as wind throughout the field; but to the ears of Wallop it was followed up by intelligence of a more afflicting nature.

After

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After this important event, the adherents of the King, flushed with the liveliest hopes, esteemed the victory their own, and pressed upon their dispirited foes, who, too certain of the death of their beloved leader, gave way on every side. In a short time the rout became complete; and Wallop was astonished to see the vassals of Northumberland and Worcester flying in all directions. He would have pursued them; but was compelled to attend to his own safety, and turn to Sir Hugh Mortimer, who had the temerity to fall upon him; while Lord March endeavoured to rally the fugitives, cheering them by his voice, exhorting and threatening them by turns. But terror has no ears, and they continued to fly, though to a fatal end, since they were cut to pieces almost to a single man.

The aged Sir Hugh, beneath the powerful arm he had to contend with, would probably soon have shared the same fate, had not the generous Wallop, pitying his

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grey hairs, rather wished to make him his prisoner than his victim. As he was disarming him, a chief, whom he knew to be Sir Walter Blunt, drew near, and exultingly exclaimed, "All is won! all is over, Wallop! The Prince of Wales hath slain Henry Percy, and we have only to lament your gallant friend, Lord Widdrington's son, who was killed close to him by the Earl of Douglas. I saw him receive the mortal wound, and fall. But you may do a humane deed, by hastening to yonder grange, where our soldiers believe Lord Percy's wife and servants are. The insolence of victory will destroy them all, if they be not powerfully protected. I am obliged to return to the King, but I will take charge of your prisoner, while you run to save them."

"Slain by Douglas!" cried Wallop. "By the great Ruler of the World, Douglas shall fall by no other hand than mine!"

At that moment, a young warrior, rushing by, heard the last words of Wallop.—

"Douglas

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"Douglas is taken prisoner by the Prince of Wales," said he. "I would he had received his Highness's sword in his heart before now, for he has just slain the noblest youth that graced the field—the gallant Lord Delancey."

Harold stood suspended. He wished to save Lady Percy and her fair friends from the fury of his own party, and also to know whether timely assistance might not yet rescue his beloved Ethelred from the grave. "Who art thou?" said he to the young man who spoke last.

The stranger raised his beaver, and discovered the features of William Scroope.

"Good youth," cried Wallop, "thou knewest and didst love Delancey. Hasten to him, bear him to his tent, and render him thine aid, if he be not really dead. My duty forces me at present another way; but

I will soon return and assist thee, if our cares can avail him."

Scroope, eager to execute his directions, turned from him almost without reply; and Wallop, with a half-broken heart, hastily pursued his way to the farm-house. Near to which he was joined by an esquire of the Earl of March, who, having heard of the danger that menaced his sister, had sent to give her notice of it, and to charge her to make her escape.

This man, as well as Wallop, had taken a nearer road than the horsemen of the King could pursue; but they were pouring forwards with such fury, and were so near at hand, that Wallop despaired of being able to restrain them. His fears were not confined to the danger of Lady Percy alone. In the destructive tumult now threatening to prevail, it was not likely that friends should be distinguished from foes; and his personal

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personal regard and his humanity equally shuddered at the prospect of those perils that environed Margiana and her sister. Hastily, therefore, ordering the esquire to prepare three horses with all speed, he resolved to fly with his friends and Lady Percy until he could leave them in a place of safety, from whence he might return to attend to the farther duties required of him; and then entering the house, with none of the exulting sensations of a victor, he fortunately saw Margiana alone. She, having perceived numbers of rebels flying across the fields, had supposed the contest near a termination, and watched, in eager hope of some one who might bring news of the King's success, and the safety of her friends.

"Oh, Wallop!" said she, rejoicing to see him, "do you not bear us good tidings?"

"Yes, dear Margiana! excellent tidings for us, but dismal for poor Lady Percy. Hotspur is killed; the rebels are utterly

defeated; and their conquerors in a few minutes will be here, intent on plunder and destruction. You must be gone without delay; for, flushed as they are with victory, it will not be possible for me, nor would it even be so for the Prince of Wales himself, were he there, to govern their unbridled humours. Call your sister and Lady Percy. Horses are in readiness, and I will see you to a place of security."

"But why, Walter, does your voice falter? why do you speak in such an accent of woe? why is your look so heart-broken? More, I fear, are slain than Hotspur. Some one perhaps, as dear to us as he to Lady Percy. You do not answer me, Harold. Yet speak, I pray you. Is Delancey safe?"

Margiana laid her hand on his arm as she spoke, and gazed with an inquiring eye. He could not bear its meaning, but turned from her with a heavy sigh, that by its chilling sound too plainly expressed the truth,

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truth. She understood him, and pressing her arms in silence across her breast, her head sunk upon them. He bent over her for an instant; but it was only for an instant.

"Indeed you must be gone," said he; "there is no time to lose. Call Lady Percy; call your sister; prepare yourself."

"My sister! ah, God protect my poor sister!"

"God's will be done!" cried Wallop, in a stifled, yet a firmer tone than before.

"And enable us," said Margiana, "to submit to this dreadful stroke as we ought! We will be ready for you this instant."

She then abruptly left him; and resolving not to think of what she had heard, or rather of what she had surmised, she went to seek the unfortunate Genevieve and her friend, and found them together. But the latter was already apprised of the death of her

husband, and was deaf to every representation of her own danger.

"Percy is no more," said she; "and I will abide here to share the fate that has been inflicted upon him."

In vain the sisters besought her to partake their flight. No consideration could induce her even to quit the house she was in, save the dread of insult from a licentious soldiery; and not force itself, she declared, should tear her to any distance from the spot where Hotspur lay.

Committing her, therefore, at the earnest request of Wallop, who now appeared, to the care of her own domestics, who might, after the tumult was subsided, acquaint Lord Mareh where they had concealed her, should he himself escape, Margiana prevailed on Genevieve to attend to her own safety; and Wallop hurried both the sisters out of the back door, and through the farm-yard, the

issue

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issue from which was concealed by a thicket of trees from the road whereby it was likely the victorious forces would approach. Here they found the horses ready that Wallop had ordered; but they had the satisfaction, before they lost sight of the grange, to see the unhappy Lady Percy carried off by her brother's followers and her own servants, in a direction that led to a small village, situated about a mile from the town of Shrewsbury.

CHAP. III.

A House on Fire.

The sun had been set near an hour, and the sky was fast obscuring with heavy clouds, that hastened the approach of a long November night, when the fair fugitives quitted the house where, in so short a time, they had suffered so much anxiety. Margiana and Wallop, pierced with affliction at Delancey's death, and the thoughts of the woe to be endured by the wretched Genevieve, rode silently on, till her questions forced them to speak, even while she encreased their inability to utter a sentence with composure.

"Whither

"Whither are we to go, Harold?" demanded she. "Do not let us remove too far, or we shall be out of the reach of further information, and lose the chance of soon seeing Delancey. Tell me, for I know you would not be sundered, and tell me truly, is he unwounded? is he in no way hurt?"

"I am unable to answer you," replied Wallop, "for we *were* separated; but he was well and unhurt when I saw him last. My search for Owen Glendower led me into a different part of the field, and prevented my afterwards rejoining him."

"And did you meet with Glendower?"

"No; and I think some of his own spirits must have conveyed him away, or else the report spread of his arrival was a false one, for in no shape could I discover him."

"But where," said Margiana, repeating Genevieve's question, on account of whose situation she feared the inconvenience, if not danger, of this removal—"where, and

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to whom, are you conducting us? I hope you do not mean we should proceed far, for it will soon be night, and these lowering clouds threaten immediate rain."

"There is an honest yeoman," replied Harold, "one Thomas Parlington, who, with his wife and two daughters, lives in an old decayed hall house, on the skirts of a village not more than seven miles from Shrewsbury. His three sons have this day fought valiantly in our army, and he himself is warmly attached to the King. His wife, too, is a worthy woman. With these good people, therefore, you will be perfectly safe, and I hope not uneasily situated, till I can return to you, and receive your further orders whither next to attend you."

"And I hope you will then be accompanied by Delancey," observed Genevieve.

"I hope so too," returned Wallop, in a faint voice, but determined, at whatever cost, to preserve the fatal secret, until she, whose

forlorn

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forlorn situation moved his manly heart to pity, should be in a place of shelter, where the soothing attentions of her sister might, if any thing could, enable her to bear the cruel shock she must receive. He had no reason to flatter himself with any doubts of the truth of what he had heard. Reported by Sir Walter Blunt, an eye-witness, it had been confirmed by William Scroope, who knew Delancey well: and the faithful Harold now, for the second time in his life, knew what sorrow was.

The feelings of Margiana were as acute as his own, from a double cause—her past friendship for him who was gone, and her tender affection for her sister. She considered it would be most advisable, if indeed it was practicable, to keep her in ignorance of what had happened, till they could reach Widdrington Tower, now their only home; and, for this reason, Margiana felt anxious to hasten thither as expeditiously as circumstances would allow. A litter,

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litter, she hoped, or some other easy conveyance, might be procured at the village to which they were going; but when there, she would endeavour to obtain a few moments of private conversation with Wallop, and consult with him on what could be done. He had confirmed old Reginald's report of their uncle's having been taken prisoner, and consequently they were free to direct their measures without the apprehensions of any control.

If the mental sufferings of Genevieve were less painful than those of her companions, she was nevertheless not without her share of grief. She loved Lady Percy dearly; and the image of her tears and despair haunted her imagination, while she spoke of them in such tender terms as made Margiana weep at the reflection how soon that anguish she lamented for another would become her own.

The roads had been rendered so bad by autumnal

autumnal rains, and by the various marchings of the royal and the rebel armies, that the progress of the travellers was necessarily very slow; and Wallop believed they were still above three miles from the place of their destination, when the evening shut completely in, and a thick small rain began to descend, which was presently driven against their left side, by the springing up of the south wind. They were unprovided with any change of raiment, for Margiana, besides having had no leisure for preparation, had depended on Wallop's returning to the camp and sending Maurice to them. They urged their horses to what speed the roughness of the way permitted; but they were at the entrance of a dreary moor, that offered no shelter of any kind, and that stretched, as Wallop informed them, to the very house whither they were repairing.

Margiana's anxiety for her sister increased so much, that she fretted inwardly, and with some difficulty forbore to express her impatience,

impatience; while Wallop, absorbed by his own melancholy reflections, neither recollected that it was dark, nor that his companions would probably soon be wet through. When Margiana spoke her apprehensions that their quickened pace might be unpleasant to Genevieve, the latter quietly replied, "How little worthy our notice are such slight sufferings as these, dear sister! Let us, while we mourn our poor friend's heavy affliction, be thankful, whether we meet with shelter this night or not, for our own milder fate."

A deep sigh was the only reply Margiana could make; and they all proceeded for another half hour almost without speaking, when Margiana, awaking from a profound reverie, observed they had quitted the beaten road; for though she could not discern what ground they were upon, she distinguished by her horse's pace, that he was walking over frequent hillocks and tufts of long rushy grass. Afraid of morasses, which the black

black swampy appearance of the moor, on their first approaching it, rendered not unlikely to be found there, she called to Wallop, and asked him if he was sure of being in the right direction?

He started at the sound of her voice, but replied, "Yes! why do you doubt it?"

"Because we have strayed from the tract," said she, "and because, however you may be acquainted with this road in the daytime, you cannotperceive any object whereby to guide you at present."

"Pardon me. The last faint traces of light are still discernible in the north-west, which is the due point we have to make for; and I keep my eye on that quarter."

"But had we not better recover the road? We may here chance to meet with marshy ground, and advance too far before we are aware of it."

"You need not have any fears of that nature," answered Harold; "This heath is every

every where sound ground; and I purposely led you from the high way as soon as I could, lest we should happen to be overtaken by the forces of either party, whose society you would probably be glad to dispense with. From the top of the last hill we passed, I thought I perceived a body of men pursuing the same road we were in. But do not alarm yourselves. They will not readily find us here; and we can easily elude them, as we shall hear the trampling of their horses' feet, should they approach us. Besides, we must now be within two miles of the place I hope to conduct you to."

Again the wanderers sunk into silence; and thoughts of Delancey again drove from the remembrance of two of them every idea unconnected with himself. Those glimmering remains of light which had hitherto directed Wallop, now totally faded away, and the rain fell thicker than before. Had Genevieve been at leisure to think of herself, her

her timid nature would have shrunk affrighted; but grief for her unhappy friend, and solicitude for her beloved husband, fully engaged all her faculties; and no sound but the bleating of a few solitary moor sheep, offered any disturbance to her meditation, till, after another long pause, Margiana exclaimed, "I see a light before us. Can it, Wallop, be the village you are in quest of?"

"It is more likely to be a light in old Parlington's house," replied he, looking at it, "for it is half a mile on this side of the village, which consists entirely of cottages, and their inhabitants are probably all at rest by this time. But we will now bear a little to the left, and then we shall regain the road."

He pressed his horse forward, and begged the sisters would keep near him. They were a little fearful of falling in with the men he had spoken of; but they would not teize him with objections; and a few minutes

minutes more brought them near the light, which, on approaching it, they discovered to be a large fire, kept under by the dampness of the air, but apparently sheltered from the rain by something which overhung it, and smouldering amid ashes, that sent forth a strong smell of burning wood.

"What means this?" cried Wallop. "Pray Heaven the rebels have not been at work! This uncouth object before us, partly surrounding a blazing heap, seems to be the remains of a house destroyed by fire."

"Were it one of the cottages of the village," said Margiana, "probably it would not be the only sufferer."

"Any place that offers rest and shelter," observed Genevieve, "is welcome at such a time as this. Pray, let us make towards it, and dry ourselves, for the present. Perhaps before long the rain may abate."

Wallop

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Wallop agreed to her request; but no sooner had they reached the smoking ruin than he exclaimed, "Alas! then it is as I suspected! This indeed was poor Parlington's house. Here is the old avenue of trees, and here the garden wall and heavy iron gate. God grant he may not have suffered in his family as well as in his possessions!"

Above three-fourths of this devoted mansion had fallen in, a sacrifice to the flames; and the remainder seemed only to have escaped the ruinous communication, owing to the preceding rain, which, however, had not extinguished the fire, that in one corner was feeding on a huge pile of rubbish, because it was screened from the shower by a half-consumed projection of the roof, supported by its adherence to that part of the building that had not caught the blaze.

"This certainly has been the work of some

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some former day," said Margiana. "If the walls that are destroyed were as solid as those which are standing appear to be, by the red glare cast upon them, some hours must have been required to consume them."

"We must consider this devastation," said Wallop, "as denoting the road by which some of the rebels came to join us, previous to this day's action. Poor Parlington was known to be a steady adherent of the King's; and he has suffered for his loyalty—happy if he himself and his wife and children have escaped the conflagration. But the rain seems coming on more heavily than ever. Do you chuse to disregard it, and ride forward to the village, or will you take shelter here under what is left of roof?"

Poor Genevieve, who was both fatigued and afraid of going further, lest they should encounter any riotous persons, begged to alight where she was; and Wallop, fastening his

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his horse to a tree, stepped forward to see what accommodation the place could be made to afford. He perceived that the hall, and a room beyond it, visible through an open door-way, upon which the red light gleamed, were still undemolished; and, without examining further, he hastily returned, and assisted his fair charges to alight.

Securing their horses near his own, he went with the two sisters into the hall, and then, for the first time, took notice that a fire was burning in the chimney of the inner room, and that a tall figure in armour was standing over it. Margiana and Genevieve hesitated whether they should proceed; but Wallop, desiring them not to be alarmed, courteously addressed the stranger, and begged he would allow two ladies to partake the refuge this ruined spot presented.

"Willingly," replied the man. "I am

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myself in pursuit of a lady, to offer her my assistance, hearing she fled this way. But I now fear I have outrode her. She was accompanied by a brave young soldier, named Harold Wallop. Can you tell me whether he be gone by?"

"He is not," returned Harold. "Who, I pray, is the lady you are in quest of?"

"A matchless one!" the stranger answered—"no offence to the fair dames who accompany you. It is Lady Margiana Winburne whom I seek. She was forced by her uncle to attend him to the scene of carnage we have just left. Thank Heaven she is yet alive! I have loved her from her infancy, and served her noble parents till they died."

"Oh, Kendrew!" exclaimed Margiana, springing forward—"Kendrew, dear old man! It can be no other than you!"

The stranger started, threw off his helmet on the ground, and eagerly strained his eyes to behold the loved object before him. When he distinguished her features, he flung himself

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himself at her feet, and clasped his aged arms around her knees. "Welcome, welcome be this day," cried he, "and blessed for evermore. Henceforward, either you drive me from you, or we never part again."

"Never!" emphatically repeated Margiana, raising the good old man with kindness, and pressing one of his hands between her's. "We will never, Kendrew, part again. But see, here is my sister. It is long indeed since last you beheld her. Little did either of us hope to find you here."

Kendrew paid his cordial respects to Genevieve, and testified his happiness at seeing both his young ladies safe; but it was easy to perceive Margiana had all his affection. He seemed unable to detach his eyes from her face, and made the fire blaze, for the pleasure of more clearly beholding her. Then, preparing to indulge the garrulity of age, he was beginning to talk of past scenes, when Wallop, glad of having it so soon in his power to leave his fair friends

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under proper protection, interrupted him, resolved to hasten back to the place where now all his thoughts were centered. But he was not more prompt to form this design than Margiana to propose it. "Your duty, Wallop," said she, "recals you to your sovereign and to the camp. Delay not here with us, since we are now secure with Kendrew, on whom we can rely with confidence not inferior to what we place in yourself. Go therefore; but let us hear of or see you soon again, and we will await you either in this place or in the village." She dared not, in her sister's hearing, trust her voice to name Delancey; but Harold well knew on what account she was solicitous he should leave them.

Recommending them both, therefore, to the care of Kendrew, he bade them farewell till the next day, when he promised to see them again; and then went out, followed by the old man, who was officious to unfasten his horse for him, and to shelter those of

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of his young ladies in an out-house for the night. Margiana, under pretence of sending some order to Maurice, which she had before forgotten, followed Wallop to the outside of the building, where they could not be overheard.

"Before you leave us," said she, "relieve, I beseech you, as well as you are able, the dreadful suspense in which I must otherwise pass this night. Is our dear Delancey really slain? Was you near him at the horrid moment?"

Wallop told her what he had heard; and when she found he was not strictly certain of the fact, she lamented so much of his time had been devoted to herself and her sister, that might have been employed more usefully for his friend, who perhaps was no more than wounded.

"Begone, worthy Harold," she cried, "begone, without delay. Do not even to-

morrow quit my brother, if your presence is serviceable to him, but send Maurice to us with information by the first dawn of morning."

"I will," he replied, "if there be a chance of Ethelred's life. If, on the contrary, all is really over, I will return to you myself, and not leave you till you are safe at Widdrington Tower. In the meantime, be cautious not to awaken your sister's suspicions."

He then mounted his horse, and departed, whilst Margiana, instead of immediately returning to the room she had quitted, continued standing, wrapt in thought, wishing, yet fearing, to admit the hope that Wallop's communication had raised. She had before, from his silent gesture, so entirely supposed he had himself seen Delancey dead, that the recent discovery of her mistake amounted, in her sanguine imagination, to a warrantable ground for indulging fairer prospects; and she leaned against a broken

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broken fragment of what once had been the great door-way into the hall, unconscious of the rain that the varying blast sometimes drove partially against her, of the crackling heap of ruins, now nearly extinguished by the wetness of the night, and even of the return of Kendrew, who, not having observed her, as she stood half concealed by the wall, had gone back to her sister.

She concluded him still busied with the horses, and the solitude of a few minutes was indulgence to her, while under circumstances that rendered Genevieve's society of all others the most irksome.

"She will talk of Delancey," thought Margiana, "when I return; and on such a subject, so dear, and so naturally occurring to us both, what can I say? Oh! gracious God," pursued she, in a low, solemn tone, and lifting up her hands to Heaven, "grant us, if it be thy pleasure, but a safe

return, with my dear sister's husband, to the once dreaded towers of Widdrington, and all the thanks that human hearts can offer for thy divine mercy——"

She was interrupted here by a dismal cry, that issued from the inner room. Without a moment's reflection, she rushed across the hall, and entered it, where a heart-breaking sight filled her with horror and amazement. Her sister was stretched like a corpse upon the flags, and Kendrew, in the extremest perturbation, was endeavouring to raise her.

"Oh Heavens!" cried Margiana, "my Genevieve, what means this?"

"The Almighty only knows," exclaimed Kendrew, trembling. "I know not. I meant not to shock or offend. I said but that your fears of a forced marriage might now cease, for that your uncle Bertram's son was this day slain by the Earl of Douglas, and Lady Genevieve sent forth that dread-

ful

ful shriek you heard, and dropt down, as you see, upon the floor."

"Alas, alas! what have you told her? But it was innocently done. You knew not Lord Delancey was her husband. Help me to raise her, good Kendrew. Beloved sister, look up. Your Ethelred is but wounded."

Poor Kendrew, distracted at what he heard, and at the mischief he had caused, now endeavoured to assist Margiana, now struck his hands against his bosom, and now proposed running to the village for help. Margiana, having raised her sister's head, supported it on her own shoulder, and directed Kendrew to fetch some water. It was a good while before he returned with it; and Genevieve, in the mean time, had opened her eyes, but they were fixed and glazed, beholding without distinguishing objects. She was perfectly motionless, and appeared to be equally insensible. In vain Margiana's soothing voice spoke the tenderest

derest things, and assured her Lord Delancey was only hurt, not killed. She gave no visible sign of understanding her; and Margiana was beginning to fear her senses were entirely fled, when she motioned with her hands, as if she wished to move. She was assisted to rise, but groaned as though subdued by pain, either bodily or mental, and shook with such violence as to be unable to stand. Kendrew joined some seats together, and they laid her upon them; but the exertion had overpowered her, for, with a deep sigh, she relapsed into insensibility, and continued an alarming while in that state. When she at length recovered, her intellects seemed in some degree restored, for, at times, she faintly uttered, "Oh, dearest sister!" and when Margiana assured her of Delancey's life, expressed her incredulity by heavy sighs.

Thankful, however, at seeing her self-possession even thus far regained, Margiana began to indulge hopes that, with respect to

 her

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her at least, all might yet be well; when with terror she beheld her breaking out into a cold, deathlike perspiration, and heard her complain of being very ill. Frightened beyond measure at the consequences that in her situation might possibly ensue from the shock she had received, she now entreated Kendrew would lose no time in hastening to the village, and bringing from thence some women, who might assist in case Genevieve became worse; and the good old man, as terrified as herself, went away, praying for his young lady's life, and imprecating mischief on himself for having reduced her to this deplorable state.

The scene that ensued was the severest trial Margiana's fortitude had ever endured. Genevieve sunk from one fainting fit to another, and no means of relief, save water only, were at hand for her sister to bestow. Scarcely dared she admit a trembling hope, when the sufferer opened her eyes; and

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when she closed them, all was again despair. Genevieve sometimes seemed desirous of speaking, yet incapable of articulating more than a few imperfect words. Once with difficulty she said, "Oh, sister, if I die, fail not——" but she could not proceed. Half the world Margiana would have given for a reviving cordial; but no cordial had she to impart, except the assurances she repeated in vain of Lord Delancey's safety. Genevieve either did not comprehend or would not believe her; and thus wore away a heavy hour, before two respectable looking country women appeared, brought by Kendrew from the village.

They had the good sense, on hearing the circumstance that occasioned their being disturbed, to bring with them some proper restoratives; and the aid of these afforded a temporary relief to the sufferings of the invalid, and a suspension of the fears of Margiana. But the relief and the suspension were of very short continuance. To-

wards

wards morning, Genevieve was seized with convulsions. Again, one frightful fit succeeded to another, and there was no longer any doubt of what the event must prove. At four o'clock, premature birth was given to a dead infant, and Genevieve, for two hours after, seemed as dead herself. Margiana, clinging to hope, indulged an expectation she would recover; but the women, less prejudiced by the force of their own wishes, and more experienced, gazed for some time in mournful silence, and then openly avowed their fears, which every moment and every indication strengthened.

Yet, just before the break of day, the hapless wife of Delancey seemed to enjoy renovated force, and the entire restoration of her faculties. She even recovered her articulation; but she made use of it only to exhort her sister to repel the delusions of hope.—"Deceive not yourself, my beloved Margiana," said she. "The mortal stroke

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is given: nor can the whole world prevent me now from following to the tomb the dearest of human beings. Let the same grave, I entreat you, hold us both—if his precious remains are rescued from the fatal field of blood."

"Talk not thus, my Genevieve. I do not believe he is dead. Report only—Wallop told you the truth. He was well when he last saw him."

"Be it so! In that case, be you his comforter. Fail not to make him all the amends a sister can, for the loss of one who would have died a thousand times to save him. Farewell! I am growing very faint again. Sister! friend of my heart! bless you! Oh, my God!——"

She endeavoured to bend forward, as if to meet the being whose sacred name she invoked; but the paleness and the dews of death overspread her beauteous countenance as she stretched forth her feeble arms to embrace Margiana. The kind-hearted villagers

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villagers wetted her lips with the cordial; but they had soon occasion to apply it with more effect to those of her sister. Genevieve breathed her last as her cheek met that of Margiana; and, as though there had been a contagion in death, the latter sunk down on the expiring corpse, equally bereft, for a time, of life and motion.

* * * * * *

Harold Wallop, giving way to the impatience that distracted him, had urged his horse to its utmost speed on his way back to the camp, where he immediately directed his course to Lord Delancey's tent. There he found William Scroope and several domestics attending on a wounded warrior, who lay apparently asleep; but, by the light of a torch that was burning near, Wallop discovered other features than those of Delancey. Scroope, at the sight of him, arose, with a silent gesture of joy, and suddenly taking him by the arm, led him to the outside of the tent.

"Forgive

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"Forgive me," said he, "the alarm I occasioned you, and rejoice with me it was a false one. But many as well as I were deceived. Lord Lothian, who arrived here late last night, was mistaken for your gallant friend at the moment he was struck down by the Earl of Douglas. Lord Delancey is well, and at present with the King, suing for his unworthy father's life. He ordered his servants to bring Lord Lothian here, in gratitude for that nobleman's having rushed forwards to assist him; and I have seen his wounds dressed, and have attended near him ever since, at Lord Delancey's request."

"The Lord reward you for your good news!" cried Wallop. "I only wish I had known all this a little sooner. I should not then have given pain to the worthiest heart in the world. But it will only be a few hours of suspense, which succeeding happiness will overbalance."

He cheerfully embraced Scroope, and hastened

hastened to the royal tent. In his way thither, he met Delancey returning from it. Their meeting was a joyful one to both. Harold was delighted to find his friend had not even received any hurt, except a slight one in his hand; and Ethelred, who had vainly sought for his wife and Margiana at the house they had lately occupied with Lady Percy, but which he found plundered, and almost destroyed, was happy to hear they had been removed to a place of safety.

When he learned, however, that Margiana believed him slain, he lamented his inability to hasten to them without waiting for the return of day; but, till he had secured the safety of his father, he could not bear to think of quitting the camp; and Lord Widdrington, besides being a prisoner to the King, who had just refused binding himself to Ethelred by any promise to grant his life, was also dangerously wounded.

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He was now, therefore, on his way to the tent of Prince John, where his father lay. Wallop accompanied him, and they found the wretched Bertram enduring with fortitude, yet in sullen and obstinate silence, the anguish of a deep wound in his side, which had brought on a considerable degree of fever. Yet the surgeon who attended him gave it as his opinion that he would recover; and the night was spent in the performance of filial duties, which seemed at length to make some impression on the mind of the unhappy man.

As soon as Ethelred could persuade himself that his father was easier, and not in immediate danger, he committed him to the care of his friend; and, taking a direction to the ruined house where Margiana and Genevieve had been left, he rode thither, his heart beating high with the hope of soon folding to his bosom the two persons most dear to him in the world.

He

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He found the spot without any difficulty. The destruction it had sustained was a sufficient indication to point it out. He approached the old avenue and garden wall by which Wallop had recognised it the night before, just as the sun was beaming his first faint rays across the dismal moor. He alighted, and fastening his horse, entered the outward hall. He had been told of the inner room, but all was so still, he doubted its late inhabitants had retired to the village beyond. However, he proceeded; and the noise he made occasioned no disturbance. On reaching the door, he observed a groupe of persons within, who appeared unconscious of his approach. He stopped, and, chilled with a presentiment of evil, surveyed the objects before him. Stretched on the seats that had been joined together to receive her, he beheld the body of his wife. Margiana was on the ground, her head laid down upon the corse, and both her arms thrown across it, while Kendrow stood in mute despair, and the two women,

in

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in respectful silence, were quietly performing some office for the dead.

Kendrew was the only person who saw Lord Delancey, till Margiana, on hearing his exclamation, raised her eyes.

Ethelred believed his wife was asleep, or had fainted. Margiana dropt her head again, unable to undeceive him; but Kendrew broke to him the fatal truth.

The two women and Kendrew retiring, Ethelred knelt down beside Margiana, and they remained alone with the body upwards of two hours.

* * * * * *

In the course of the morning Kendrew was dispatched back to the camp, where he acquainted Wallop with what had passed, and recommended Lord Widdrington to his further care. He returned accompanied by Maurice and Lord Delancey's servants, and a proper conveyance followed him for

bearing

bearing the remains of Genevieve to Widdrington Tower. The mournful procession was attended by Ethelred and Margiana, who strove to support each other in their grief.

They travelled very slowly, and were several days on the road. On their arrival at the castle, Kendrew adressed Lord Delancey in these terms:

"My Lord, I am the old man who, when you was hard pressed by the Earls of Douglas and March, rushed between you and danger, at the moment Lord Lothian fell. If I was of service to you on that day, I beseech you to grant me the boon I crave.—Give immediate orders that Scruton and his wife be laid in irons, in the strongest dungeon of the castle. I will be answerable for the justice of the command."

"What is their crime?" said Delancey.

"I will not convey it in words, my Lord. I will *shew* it to you as soon as you are at leisure.

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leisure. You cannot attend to the subject at present; but, in the meantime, secure that man and woman. If you neglect doing so, they, having seen me with you, will fly the castle before morning."

Lord Delancey, having mused a few moments, complied in part with Kendrew's request. He gave directions that Scruton and Joyce should be confined; but forbade that they should be laid in irons, or otherwise ill treated.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IV.

A secret Chamber.

The obsequies of Genevieve could not be said to renew the affliction of Margiana. Her grief was as profound as the occasion of it was just, and as her regard for the deceased had been sincere; and it was rendered still more acute by the dismal circumstances attending it. The image of a beloved and amiable sister, expiring from the shock received from a mistaken report, in a situation so forlorn, so nearly desolate, and from a cause so peculiarly to be lamented, was ever present to Margiana's imagination. Yet her affliction, as in the case

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case of her father's death, partook of the general good sense and regulation of her character. She neither ostentatiously displayed nor sullenly confined it to her own bosom. She rather shunned than sought conversation, even with Delancey; yet she refused not to confer with him on necessary subjects. She received his soothing attentions naturally as proceeding from a brother; and when the faithful Kendrew urged her not needlessly to indulge her grief, but to look forward to brighter days, now that the tyranny of her uncle—he spoke, he said, on sure grounds—was for ever overpast, she attempted to reward his kindness and anxiety by a smile, which though at first assumed, soon became the result of that pious and cheerful hope, so constantly the inmate of her own innocent heart.

The regret of Lord Delancey, though he would not have been willing to own it, even to himself, was probably much less severe than that of Marciana. He had loved Genevieve,

Genevieve, it is true, when at length really convinced that her sister was no more; but his love was the offspring of compassion; for, had he not believed her attached to him with a tenderness that was preying on her fragile constitution, she would never, with all her beauty, have become his wife. Margiana was the only woman to whom he had been truly devoted; and when he supposed her lost, a painful void was left in his heart. Genevieve's habitual melancholy engaged his pity; while the supposed cause of it, a partiality for Lord Lothian, excited his contempt. During his residence with her at Paris, some particularities in her behaviour towards himself, though unintended on her part, led him to suspect he had been mistaken; but the contrivances of Clara Castles quelled an idea that no young man, who speaks the truth, will deny to be flattering. He then drove her from his remembrance, as one not worthy of a place in it; yet the sight of her faded form and profound dejection when again he met

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her at Lord Percy's, insensibly softened his severity, though he despised the woman who could grieve for an object so worthless; for he long supposed Lord Lothian's excesses to be the ground of Genevieve's melancholy.

Harold Wallop was the person who removed this error. Partly from conjecturing the truth himself, and partly from extracting confessions from Lady Percy, which she had not intended to make, till, drawn on by his artful, but well-meant, observations and questions, she knew not how either to proceed or retract, he in time became nearly certain of that secret Genevieve had so carefully and painfully preserved. So that her declaration of indifference for Lord Lothian was far from giving him so much surprise as he pretended to feel.

It may be supposed his conjectures were not long withheld from his friend: and thus Lord Delancey's affections were secured

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ed on the side of gratitude and commiseration, less than from genuine original predilection. After he was married, Geneviève's sweetness of manners, and his own rectitude, continued his attachment; yet, beneath the inmost folds of his heart, the image of Margiana still predominated; and when he was first apprised of her being yet alive, a sentiment undefinable almost to himself struck cold to his feelings, and made him recollect, with a sigh, that he was engaged for life.

Yet the goodness and tenderness of his disposition made him now a sincere mourner. Could a wish have recalled the hapless wife whose love for him had destroyed her, he would have thought himself a savage not to have breathed it; and he severely blamed his own heart, when, oppressed by mournful images, and especially when rendering the last solemn duties to the departed, he sometimes caught himself involuntarily exclaim-

ing—"Thank Heaven, however, Margiana lives!"

The orders of Lord Delancey, suggested by Kendrew, had been given only just in time. Scruton, on perceiving the old man in the train of his young Lord, had suddenly retreated into the castle, and, with his wife, had attempted immediate evasion. Kendrew, however, had powerful reasons to excite him to prompt execution. The man and woman were secured; but, as had been directed, without insult, or any other oppression than simple confinement in one of the dungeons.

Till the funeral was over, their names were never mentioned, or, perhaps, they themselves even thought of. Kendrew bore too heartfelt a respect for the family of his formerly beloved Lady, whom in youth he had accompanied from her peaceful retreat in Scotland, and continued faithfully to serve

while

while she lived, not to refrain even from the subject nearest to his heart, so long as any duty remained unpaid to the early-fated Genevieve. But this mournful ceremony past, he became anxious to unburthen his loaded mind to Lord Delancey, whose nature, so unlike that of his father, claimed his esteem, and engaged all of his affection that belonged not to Margiana.

Ethelred, on his desiring a conference, recollected Scruton and his confinement, which affairs of nearer concern had driven from his memory. He sent for Kendrew, and asked him of what nature was the information he wished to impart?

"Of an important nature, my Lord; but there is only one room in the castle wherein I can communicate it."

"What room is that, good Kendrew?"

"A secret chamber, my Lord. We must repair to it alone, and at night, unless you would chuse to have more exposed to the

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domestics of the castle than it would be expedient for them to know. It would be well also if Lady Margiana herself were not yet made acquainted with what I have to tell you."

"You raise my curiosity, Kendrew. But of what do you accuse Scruton and his wife?"

"I will *shew* you, my Lord, whenever you chuse. Is it your pleasure to go with me this night to the chamber I speak of?"

Ethelred consented, and named an hour for meeting Kendrew in the great hall, when every other person in the castle should be gone to rest.

"At that hour," said the old man, "I will be in waiting, and will be provided with every thing necessary for the undertaking."

* * * * *

It

It had been one of Lord Delancey's first concerns, on arriving at Widdrington Tower, to inquire after his mother, whose objections against seeing him, he concluded, could now no longer exist. But from the same woman-servant through whose means he had once or twice before exchanged communication with her, he learned that Lady Widdrington had, some time ago, privately quitted the castle, and was gone no one knew whither, without even a single attendant. Of his sister also nothing had been heard; and Ethelred's perplexity was unmitigated, excepting by a hope, and that a very faint one, that these two dear relations might be together.

In fact, it seemed not very improbable that Arlette might know the place of her mother's retirement, and have gone to her, after she left the protection of Lord and Lady Percy. Her brother, meanwhile, consoled himself with the reflection, that as soon as the recent circumstances which had

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befallen their family became generally known, Lady Widdrington would either by letter, or by her actual return home, remove the anxiety she must suppose him to be labouring under.

* * * * * *

At the appointed time, Lord Delancey quitted his apartment, whither he had retired as usual, to avoid exciting any observation; though he knew not why all this mystery needed to be practised; and descending into the hall, found Kendrew expecting him, furnished with a lamp, and bearing on his shoulder a pickaxe and a mattock. Ethelred was surprised; but he forbore asking any questions, and only told the old man he was ready to follow him. Kendrew returned no answer. He appeared to be in considerable emotion; and, without uttering a word, led to those steps under the great staircase which conducted to the castle vaults. He went down; and Lord Delancey wondering in what all this would terminate, followed him.

They

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They traversed in silence all those gloomy aisles where Ethelred and his friend had fruitlessly spent so many hours. At the remote end of the furthest of these, Kendrew began to re-ascend another flight, communicating with the back part of the castle; but when he had mounted about half-way, he stopped on a broad landing, and, setting down his lamp, said they need go no further.

"Why," asked Lord Delancey, "have you brought me all the length of the vaults, to reach this spot? Could we not have come down these stairs, instead of those under the great hall?"

"Not without passing through the servants' apartments, my Lord. And even now, distant as we are, I fear awaking them."

"And what must we do here," said Ethelred, "if we are not to ascend nearer to them? I see no door through which we can advance on either side."

"We must make ourselves a passage," replied the old man. "Will you be pleased, my Lord, to assist me?"

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On the left of the landing, there were some stones in the wall more roughly dressed than the others. The joints between them were large, and they seemed put together in an unworkmanlike manner. Kendrew, taking his pickaxe, began to loosen them from each other; but his hands trembled, and he appeared so much discomposed, that Ethelred took the tool from him, and, observing his injunctions to make as little noise as possible, with more able hands soon removed a large stone; after which it became an easy task to render the opening as wide as they chose.

When it was sufficiently capacious to admit them, the old man desired Lord Delancey would pass through. He did so; and Kendrew followed with the lamp.

Lord Delancey now found himself in a small square chamber, in which there was neither door, nor window, nor chimney, nor furniture, of any kind. The floor consisted of large flags, and it was vaulted overhead; but

but there was no other substance whereon to rest the eye, save four bare walls. Kendrew held the lamp aloft; then he lowered it to the ground. He seemed confounded and astonished, and indistinctly muttered a curse. Ethelred began to fancy his imagination was disturbed; and, almost smiling at his own credulity, asked him for what they came there?

Kendrew hung his head in silence; but it was the silence of reflection. After awhile, raising his eyes, with a mortified look —"I fear, my Lord," said he, "I have nothing more to shew you."

"Nothing more! my worthy old friend. I profess you have not shewn me anything as yet. But why has this chamber been walled up in such a manner as to leave no place of entrance?"

Instead of answering, Kendrew stamped with his foot, and listened to the sound his action produced. He then shifted his place,

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stamped upon another flag, and listened again. He proceeded to a third, and did the like. One moment, Ethelred apprehended him to be in his dotage; and the next, fancied some serious mystery gave rise to this strange behaviour. However, he attended patiently, and without interrupting him, to the gestures of the old man, who went on, separately trying every different flag, to discover whether it returned an echo unlike the rest. At length, he stamped on one that seemed less firm beneath his feet than the others. He changed colour, tried it again, and found that at one end it gave way, as if the soil was loose below it. An exclamation burst from him, and he went to seize the mattock, which he had left on the landing of the stairs without. He brought it back, and, without much difficulty, raised the flag, Lord Delancey assisting him to remove it. Nothing appeared under it but common loose earth. Some of this he scraped aside with his hands; and in a few minutes

Ethelred,

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Ethelred, who held the lamp so as to throw a light on what he was doing, perceived that he had reached a substance which did not give way to his efforts.

"Here, here!" cried Kendrew. "Lower your lamp, my Lord. Look here!"

Delancey looked. He saw a dark coarse cloth.

"Lift up that cloth," said the old man.

Delancey complied, and beheld underneath it the remains of the feet of a corpse, decayed as though they had long been dead.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "what means this?"

Kendrew had resumed his tool, and was now working at the next flag, which lay in a direction to cover the upper part of the body,

body, supposing it entire. He loosened, but was not able to raise it. Ethelred, shuddering, and dreading to hear the truth, assisted him. Below the thin surface of soil the coarse cloth again appeared. "Remove it, my Lord," said Kendrew, in a solemn tone. "I cannot."

On lifting it up, Ethelred perceived the other extremity of the figure, wrapped in what seemed once to have been a costly mantle, and the head was covered with a velvet cap, near to which Kendrew, kneeling down, held the lamp close to it, and directed Lord Delancey's attention to a large letter worked in gold, on the front of it.

"See you that letter, my Lord?" said he.

It was a W. The embroidery had been wrought by Margiana; and Delancey had often seen his uncle wear the cap. He clasped his hands together, and his figure stiffened

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stiffened into horror, like one of the fabled beholders of Medusa.

"Here—here," cried Kendrew, with mournful vehemence, "lie the remains of the once gallant Earl of Widdrington, foully murdered by the hand of Scruton. In this chamber saw I my noble master treacherously slain, by the wicked agent of——"

He stopt. Lord Delancey groaned, and covered his face with both his hands. A deep silence for some minutes ensued. Kendrew's nature melted when he perceived that Lord Delancey wept.

"Thus it is," said the old servant. "The hearts of good men are grieved for the vices of the wicked; but you, my Lord, are blameless. Such a son, and such a wife as your excellent mother, may obtain forgiveness at the throne of mercy for the guilty husband and father. Why should you remain longer here, to witness this cruel spectacle? You

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"You have seen enough for conviction; and when you think fit to hear the sad tale I have to tell, I will be ready to obey your call. Let us now for the present cover up from sight these dear remains."

Sobbing, he took another view of all that was left of his beloved master; and then replaced the cloth, and strewed the soil as before. But it was some time ere he could make Ethelred comprehend that he wished to move the flag-stones back to their places.

At length, they left this dismal place, and returned along the vaults to the great hall, where Kendrew felt unwilling to leave his young Lord in the affliction that pressed upon him. The latter guessed his thoughts, and would not drive him away.

"Sleep is not for me this night," said he. "Relate your dreadful story now."

"Not now, my good Lord. You are too much shocked already."

"Think

"Think you the shock can be encreased, old man? After knowing the deadly fact itself, can any circumstances aggravate my sorrow? No; since the thoughts of every other subject are excluded, let me now listen to this, and learn at once all its horrid particulars. Sit down—Omit nothing, yet be brief. When came my dear uncle to this fatal place?"

"After the battle at Cirencester, my Lord, when the rebel nobles were surprised in their camp, and defeated, my beloved master declared to me his resolution of taking refuge in his own castle, with his brother; the rather, as there had lately before been a difference between them, and he wished to prove that he, on his part, had forgotten it. So, alas! he thought had your father too; for he received him kindly, entreated him to keep close within the walls, lest he should be seized by Henry's partisans; and undertook to go to court, and implore his pardon of the King himself, while he maintained the place of his retreat

retreat a profound secret. He went, but soon returned with the unwelcome news, that his Highness was inflexible."

"My father surely went not to London?" interrupted Lord Delancey.

"I know not for certain. He said he did, and brought back this fabricated answer. The malcontents were then gathering round Raby, hoping to make successful head against the Lancastrian forces, and frequent and urgent were the solicitations my Lord received to join them. Methought your father secretly favoured these. I am sure he facilitated their reaching his brother. However, the Earl was unmoved by them; for he considered this second undertaking as hopeless; and it began to repent him that he had offended the King. Yet, by his brother's entreaties, he was persuaded to stay here, and deterred from going in person to implore the royal mercy. He was loaded with caresses, and believed himself secure from every danger. But your noble mother, my

my Lord, judged differently of this treacherous calm. She loved your father really with a sister's love, and often urged him to throw himself on the clemency of his sovereign. Had he fortunately been induced to follow this advice, she was of opinion his actions would have been restricted, and his determination become known. Her succeeding conduct proved this.

"She sent for me one day into this hall, when your father was absent, and, putting a key into my hands—'Kendrew,' said she, 'you are a faithful servant, attached to your Lord, and may be trusted. Should it happen that he ever is debarred from leaving this castle, you shall be furnished with the means of liberating him. Preserve this key, which opens the side-entrance of the building facing the stables. Reveal to no person my part in this concern. I rely on your discretion.'

"Lady Rachel said no more; but I had heard enough to make me comprehend my Lord was in the hands of an enemy. I would

would fain have told him all my thoughts, but Lady Rachel's injunction forbade my naming her, and his anger rose whenever I expressed a suspicion of the good faith of his brother. He would bid me keep my cold-blooded caution within my own bosom, and said his father's son could never betray the man who trusted in him.

"Then it was, my Lord, that you obtained my master's pardon from the King; but he never knew you did so. On the contrary, your kind and dutiful conduct precipitated his fate.

"Late one evening I was with him in the lower court of the castle, when we saw Scruton, who had been sent on domestic business to a neighbouring village, ride furiously over the drawbridge, throw himself off his horse with the utmost precipitation, and repair to his master, with whom he remained some time in private. The fell resolution was then, perhaps, suddenly taken. You was within a short distance of Widdrington Tower, with a pardon for your uncle;

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uncle; and there was no time to be lost. The cruel deceivers came to us. Bertram Winburne smiled on his brother, and courteously warned him in from the night-air. The narrow door, for there was then a door, stood open into the fatal chamber we have lately left. An opposite one, on the broad landing of the stairs, was also unclosed. Bertram took his brother's arm, and led him into this chamber. It was nearly dark. They entered into conversation. I was behind them, with Scruton, when your father suddenly grasped me by the throat, while Scruton, drawing a dagger from beneath his vest, plunged it to the hilt in your uncle's side. I believe it pierced his heart. He groaned and fell. At that instant, Lady Widdrington, descending the stone steps, reached the door fronting us; and her husband, leaving me to Scruton, flew to secure her from causing any alarm. The villain seized me; but I had now recovered my presence of mind, and struggled with him. He would have stabbed me; but the

the dagger was still in my master's side, and he could not with one hand draw it forth. I collected all my force to give him such a blow as brought him to the ground; and fled, anxious to preserve my life, for the purposes of justice, not revenge.

"To Lady Rachel's providential intervention, no doubt, I owed my escape. Bertram dared not leave her at liberty. Scruton was stunned with his fall; and the time it required to secure her within a remote chamber enabled me to quit the confines of the castle. I concealed myself within the woods all that night, and several succeeding days, and then, burying my cloak and upper garments, offered myself as a peasant to work at hard labour for an honest farmer. I was unsuspected, employed, and entertained; and thereby continued so near Widdington Tower as to hear of every material transaction there. Vassals love to talk of their lords; and the yeoman whom I served spoke of what every person in the vicinity had been made to believe; namely,

namely, Lord Widdrington's second act of rebellion against his liege lord, in joining the insurgents near Raby, even at the time when his nephew was bringing to him full forgiveness for his former offences. Also, of Scruton's being dispatched in pursuit of him, and afterwards of his vain attempt to bring him back, and the fabricated story of his being slain in battle.

"I heard all this, and vowed—forgive me, my Lord—the deadliest hatred against the perpetrators of all this guilt. Yet my heart melted when I heard of the excess of your affliction. I resolved to observe the utmost caution, and not to endanger one of the only two witnesses of this horrid deed by a single rash step. Lady Rachel, we heard, had voluntarily confined herself in performance of a vow; and you was said to have gone to London to bring back your cousins, now their uncle's wards.

"I wondered how the corpse had been disposed of; and one evening, returning from the village of Warkworth, in my peasant's

peasant's garb, with a load of timber, hearing that Scruton was from home, I made some pretence for passing through the courts of the castle, and saw the entrance into the bloody chamber had been walled up. I remembered some mason's work had been in hand at the fatal period; and the building-stones that were strewed around offered a ready means of concealment, less liable than interment to detection. I speak upon a certainty; the body was not buried *then*."

"How know you that?" asked Lord Delancey. "Confine your narrative at present to what concerns that alone. How obtained you further information relating to it?"

"Through the young Earl of March and Sir Hugh Mortimer, my Lord, several years after. Much of matter, interesting to you and Lady Margiana, fell out in the interval; but I will now, in observance of your commands, speak only of the subject we are upon.

"You

"You know, that on the late breaking out of Glendower's rebellion, the two chiefs I have mentioned came into the north to concert their measures with your kinsmen of the house of Percy; and so many disaffected men flocked to their standard, that they were enabled to defy and plunder many strong places. It was thought likely they would attack this fortress; and I hoped the hour was come for the exposure of the secret crime I had witnessed. I was rather prompted to the acceleration of this, than deterred from it, by the unexpected return of my beloved young Lady, which did not occasion in me the same surprise it did in many others, as I have since heard, for the report of her death, so carefully spread by Lady Rothes, to further her own interested views, never reached me.

"Lady Margiana's re-appearance redoubled my anxiety to do justice to her father's memory, and punish his murderer. I threw off my disguise, and went to join the forces of the two leaders on their approaching

Widdrington Tower. Though I hated the cause they were engaged in, I did my best to serve them; but your father and his men, the base Scruton excepted, made so gallant a resistance, that I feared the fortune of the day was turning against us. Under this apprehension, I bethought myself of an effectual means of securing not only the victory, but peculiarly the point I wished for.

"Forcing my way up to Sir Hugh, I told him I knew of a weak place on the northern side of the building, and advised him to direct all his force against the spot at which I let fly my arrow. With those words, I bent my bow, and hit the very place, which had been built up weaker than the rest of the wall. To engage him to follow my counsel, I assured him, could he penetrate into the chamber within, he might make his own conditions with the Earl of Widdrington.

"The earnestness of my looks and language persuaded the chief; or, to speak more

more properly, the justice of Providence prevailed. The ill-constructed wall was beaten inwards. Sir Hugh and his nephew rushed on. I followed them, and beheld the same object you have lately seen, but without even the poor appearance of sepulture. 'This,' cried I, 'is the body of the late Lord Widdrington, my noble master! falsely reported to have died in rebellion, but, in fact, slain here, by his brother's order.'

"As I spoke, your father, pale and gasping, appeared before us. He had heard my words. He knew me, and concluded himself undone. Yet he begged for mercy, and to be screened from shame.

'Turn then,' said Sir Hugh, 'to forward the interests of the Earl of Percy. Join your forces to ours, and hie with us to Wales. If thou refusest, or failest in these particulars, exposure and destruction be upon thee!'

"My Lord, you know the rest. Your father's acquiescence was implicit. In a few

hours he was on his march for Lord Percy's camp; and, leaving Scruton behind, to preserve the secret chamber still a mystery, he took Lady Margiana with him, to prevent, no doubt, her suspicions being awakened by any rumours that might obtain, and probably anxious to complete her marriage with you before they reached her ears.

"This is all I have to say on the subject of my late Lord; but, as I remained long concealed in the neighbourhood of this castle, and, by means of the key which had been given me, had constantly free, though private, access into it, I am in possession of many other unknown particulars, which I shall be glad to reveal jointly to you and Lady Margiana, whenever you are disposed to permit me."

"Some other time, good Kendrew," said Lord Delancey, without raising his head, for he had long been listening to him with his face concealed by his cloak—"some other time. I have heard enough for to-night. Retire

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Retire to your rest, my friend, if rest you can obtain, and leave me now."

"But will *you*, my Lord, endeavour to rest?"

"Fear me not, good old man. I will see thee again in the morning."

"But suffer me, kind master, ere I go, to light you to your chamber. I promise I will leave you there."

Lord Delancey was in too much anguish of mind to contend. He arose and went to his apartment, where Kendrew quitted him, and where he spent the remainder of the heavy hours in prayer, to deprecate Divine vengeance, till he met Margiana, the next morning, at breakfast in the great hall.

At this, as well as at every other meal, the old servant persisted to attend on them; and it grieved him to behold the haggard altered looks of Lord Delancey. So remarkable was the change that had taken

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place since the preceding day, that Margiana noticed it, and inquired if he was not well?

"You appear," said she, "as though you had not slept; as though some additional uneasiness of mind——"

He turned from her inquiring eye, and strove to suppress the sighs that filled his aching heart.

"Hope for better days, Ethelred," continued she, kindly. "You have lost, it is true, a faithful and a tender friend; but you have many left; and it will go hard but that the good services you have rendered to the King will insure your father's pardon."

He shuddered at hearing his father named; and wished to lead her thoughts to some other subject.

"You

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"You forget," he observed, "the painful suspense I am held in respecting my mother and Arlette. Where, all this while, can *they* be wandering? What may not *they* be enduring? The probability of their being together is but very slender; and if they are not, how can we account for the absence of the unhappy girl, who has no other guide than her own imperfect judgment?"

"You need not, my Lord, be under any uneasiness respecting your mother," said Kendrew.

"Why not, my good friend?" asked Margiana; for Ethelred was inattentive, and had not heard him.

"Because," replied the old man, "that excellent Lady is safe, and employed as she has always been through life, usefully and worthily."

"How!" cried Lord Delancey, starting from his reverie—"of whom are you speaking?"

"Of Lady Widdrington, my Lord;—a woman, whose virtues might suffice

to bring down blessings on a whole family of sinners."

"Good Heavens! do you know any thing concerning her?"

"A great deal, my Lord. I had once the happiness of rendering her a material service; after which I spent many days in attending her, and was proud of receiving her commands."

"You astonish me, Kendrew. And do you know where she now is?"

"Aye, my Lord; she is at Rothes Castle, in Scotland, where she has long resided, under the obscure name of Dame Elizabeth, guarding from a threatened danger young Hengist, the infant son of my late dear Lord by Lady Rothes."

"Oh, the blessed saints!" exclaimed Margiana. "Said you Dame Elizabeth? Was she I knew there, and loved so well, *your mother*, Lord Delancey?"

Ethelred, admitting the first pleasurable emotion that had warmed his heart for many a day,

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a day, demanded an explanation. The melancholy circumstances that had attended his meeting with Margiana had, ever since, prevented his asking a narrative of what had befallen her during her long abode in Scotland. He had only generally learned she had been confined by order of Lady Rothes, from Harold Wallop, who had referred him to herself for particulars; and now, at his request, she briefly related to him the narrative of her seizure, captivity, and liberation; dwelling more minutely on that part of her story that respected Lady Widdrington.

When she had concluded—"How like my mother!" cried Delancey; "fearless of danger, when a duty was to be performed!"

"But why—why," asked Margiana, hesitating, "was her protection, or any protection, necessary for little Hengist?"

Ethelred arose, and walked from the table.

"Your uncle Bertram believed him le-

gitimate," replied Kendrew, lowering his voice. "Lady Rothes has taken great pains to have him esteemed so."

Margiana returned no answer. She felt for the feelings of Delancey, attributing them to the implied reflection on his father, and not to his own fears of being superseded by the child. To soothe those feelings, she said, "Oh, my Lord, why should not your mother now be restored to you, and to her home? Ought she not? Yes, surely, she ought to be invited back."

"Let me go for her, my good young Lord," cried Kendrew. "A meeting between you will rejoice the hearts of you both; and I know the situation of the place, and the nearest road to it, better than any of your servants here."

"I will go myself," returned Ethelred. "It is my duty; and you shall stay here with Lady Margiana."

This determination was highly approved

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of by her, and Kendrew submitted to it. But, owing to the absence of Lord Widdrington, so many affairs of consequence claimed his son's immediate and peculiar attention, that he found to his great regret, it would not be possible for him to gratify his own wishes in this particular. He therefore, with reluctance, was forced to suffer Kendrew, and a suitable number of attendants, to set out for Rothes Castle on the following morning; though, calculating the number of days it was likely they would be on the road, he resolved nothing should prevent his meeting his mother at Edinburgh, and there putting himself at the head of her escort, from thence to Widdrington Tower.

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CHAP. V.

An old Servant.

It was fortunate for Lord Delancey that he had indispensable avocations to engross nearly all his time, and very much of his attention. A profound melancholy might otherwise have seized upon his heart, which had received the severest wound from the certainty of his father's guilt. Several circumstances that had occurred during his stay at home, when he brought down the royal pardon for his uncle, had created in his mind a fear, that every thing had not been done which might and ought to have been at least attempted to prevent his departing

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parting a second time from his duty; and he believed Scruton capable enough of concealing the King's clemency, and representing him as inflexible, when it was supposed he was pursuing the noble rebel to Raby; if, indeed, he had his master's orders to authorise his villainy. But wickedness such as Ethelred had been informed of, he had not imagined it in the heart of man to conceive. Undeceived in this particular, and finding the perpetrator of it his own father's agent, horror and agony had little of power that Lord Delancey did not feel.

Scruton, who was still in confinement, underwent no uncertainty respecting its cause. He had seen Kendrew, and knew he was imprisoned by the directions of his young master; yet hope did not forsake him, for he depended on the return of his Lord to restore him to liberty. He knew not that Bertram was a still more wretched captive than himself; for Scruton and Joyce were

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were so justly hated by every domestic in the castle, that none went to relieve the gloom of their dungeon, save the man appointed to carry their food, and he resolutely refused to answer any of their inquiries.

Ethelred, though resolved to be just, was yet slow to inflict a mortal punishment on one, who, villain as he was, had acted under his father's directions. Besides, he knew not but that other discoveries might be in Scruton's power to make. The nature of Joyce's guilt he had yet to learn, for Kendrew had appeared to implicate her as well as her husband.

He determined, therefore, to wait until a second conference with Kendrew, and his mother's advice, might strengthen his own judgment, and prevent his acting with a precipitation it was possible to repent of. But the agitated state of his mind, and the acuteness of his feelings, stamped a dejection

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jection on his face that excited all the sympathy of Margiana. Herself still deeply deploring Genevieve's death, she attributed his broken spirits to the same cause that affected her own; and felt that she had never valued Ethelred so highly before. His love failed to impress her, while she had believed herself the object of it; but now that she thought him mourning the loss of her sister, she both cherished and commiserated him with all that mingled tenderness, yet strength of regard, of which women alone perhaps are capable.

The many concerns that pressed upon him prevented their frequently meeting, excepting at the hours of refreshment. At these times, exerting herself to overcome her own recollections, she endeavoured to appear cheerful, and to excite cheerfulness in him, by promoting only subjects of hope and satisfaction. This she considered as a duty. She would talk of his mother's return; and, reminding him of Arlette's providential

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vidential retreat from Edinburgh to Rothes Castle, would dwell on the probability of her having ever since continued privately there, under Lady Widdrington's protection; though the latter might think it prudent to conceal the circumstance during her acquaintance with Margiana, on account of Lord Lothian's being also at the castle at the same time.

All this Delancey admitted; and he loved the kind friend and sister who was so solicitous to promote his peace of mind. But one frightful image filled his heart, and closed it against the approach of every joy.

Change of place affords a temporary relief to the wretched. He was glad when the appointed time arrived for his setting out to join his mother; and Margiana saw him depart, with hopes of a happier meeting. She herself looked forward with real pleasure to the return of Lady Widdrington, including

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including, as she was willing to believe, that of Arlette; and only the tears she continued to shed, as a tribute to the memory of Genevieve, interrupted the course of that tranquillity which, both from constitution and principle, had ever, till now, been the inmate of her bosom.

Some doubts, however, relating to her father, and others raised by the mysterious paper that mentioned Father Geoffry, still clouded her mind; but she resolved to clear them, by taking the first opportunity of an interview with Kendrew, whose knowledge of all the perplexing transactions of the castle she believed almost unbounded.

During Lord Delancey's absence, she received no news, but that her uncle had been conveyed a close prisoner to London, in the train of the victorious army, and that he was strictly confined in the Tower, the King not having yet determined his future fate.

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fate. Her generous nature led her to wish he might be forgiven; and she reflected with pleasure that Wallop was near the person of the offended monarch, and that he would be as strenuous for what could impart happiness to his friend, as that friend could be himself.

A day sooner than she had expected the return of the travellers, she received the welcome news of their approach, accompanied by an additional subject of rejoicing. Maurice came running to her, his eyes sparkling with pleasure, and acquainted her their young Lord had sent forward one of his followers to inform her his mother was within a mile of the castle, and also Lady Arlette and the young Hengist, whom Lady Widdrington would not trust from under her own protection. Margiana felt more of joy than surprise. Anxious to shew all the respect in her power to the sister-in-law of her father, to the mother of Lord Delancey, and to one whom, for her own intrinsic worth,

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worth, he loved so well, she ordered all the household to attend her, to meet and welcome their excellent Lady home; and numbers, both within and without the castle, were almost instantly assembled. With delight in all their faces, they followed her to the confines of the park, where they were soon descried by the travellers; and the impatient Arlette, with some of her natural impetuosity, though that was now considerably softened down by the precepts and example of her admirable tutoress, sprung forward at the sight of Margiana.

Their meeting was an affectionate and a happy one; but Margiana felt most of joy when she bent her knee to Lady Widdrington, and found herself pressed to her maternal bosom.

"Said I not," cried that Lady, tenderly embracing her, "said I not, dear and virtuous Margiana, we should meet again? You little

little thought it would be so soon, or that it would be here."

"To find you anywhere," replied Margiana, "would be happiness to me; but to discover such kindness and excellence in so near and dear a connexion, gives indeed an overflow of pleasure."

Ethelred now came forward, and pointed out to Margiana her little favourite, asleep in the arms of the servant before whom he sat on horseback. "This is too much of delight," said she, "for one day!"

"Let us not complain of it," said Lady Widdrington, smiling, "were it twice as much. But you, niece, do the honours of Widdrington Tower. We follow your lead, and are ready to advance to the castle in your train."

"I, with the rest of its inmates, am too fortunate at being in your's," replied Margiana, motioning for Lady Widdrington to advance, while Arlette, springing from her horse,

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horse, said she would walk home with her cousin.

"Ah! mad girl," cried Margiana, as they proceeded, "what a special Providence has watched over *your* safety, to place you, when you had the least right to expect so great a blessing, under the protection of such a mother!"

"Aye; was it not lucky?" said Arlette. "I have been in Heaven ever since! No confinement, no ill-humour, to fret me; but good instruction, so pleasantly given, that it made me feel heartily ashamed of what I had done, though so few people knew of it. For, after all, what do you think, coz, Lord Lothian proved not worth a farthing. A wild, bad, scapegrace! Oh, you knew him the best. I will trust to your opinion another time. Wallop is a sad fright, to be sure; but he would outweigh a thousand such for goodness."

Margiana was glad to find Arlette had acquired a right way of thinking, without losing

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losing her vivacity, of which latter she gave many proofs before they reached the castle.

Lady Widdrington possessed very great fortitude; and she required it all to conceal the emotion with which, after so long an absence, she re-entered those gates she had quitted under the most dreadful impressions. Much conversation had passed between herself and Ethelred on the subject of those horrid events that had driven her from her home; and both had concluded not to torture Margiana, and disgrace him they were bound to revere, by an unlimited revelation of his guilt. They agreed she should be suffered to suppose that her uncle, convinced of Hengist's legitimacy, had formed a nefarious design of stealing him from his mother, and of either secreting him at home, or sending him beyond the seas; and they determined to place the detention Lady Widdrington had undergone wholly to the account of her declared

clared purpose of warning Lady Rothes of her infant's danger; as her evasion was actually made with that intent.

On the subject of the murder, they resolved to observe the most profound silence. Margiana's present opinion of the manner of her father's death had already sufficiently pained her; and even Kendrew, though he had once been so anxious to inform her of the worst, now acquiesced in this prudent plan, and confessed no good purpose whatever could be answered by awakening and redoubling her anguish by a recital of the dreadful truth. When, therefore, the openness of Margiana's heart induced her to reveal every action and thought of her life to the amiable woman whom she held deserving of her utmost confidence, the other was prepared to return her communication, by a guarded narrative, sufficient to clear up her doubts, without too keenly affecting her sensibility.

They

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They had leisure and solitude for these exchanges of the heart, for Lord Delancey no sooner saw his mother and sister safe at Widdrington Tower than he hastened to London, to join his solicitations to those of Harold Wallop for his father's life. His recent acquaintance with the crime he had committed rendered him more anxious on this head than ever; for Delancey, without ostentation, was a Christian in the most charitable sense of the word; and he shuddered at the idea of his parent's being precipitated into eternity, with such a load of guilt unrepented of, unatoned for.

His mother and Margiana could not but approve of the pious motive that led him from them, though both felt his absence to be a loss, especially the former, whose love for him was proportioned to his merits, and who had already so long mourned the deprivation of his society.

Lady

Lady Widdrington acquainted Margiana, that the particulars of her own escape were so connected with the history of Kendrew's concealment, that it would be advisable he should preface her narration with the account he had long ago intended giving in the burying-place, when the success of Lady Rothes's scheme prevented the appointed meeting there. The old man was accordingly summoned; and being previously instructed what to communicate and what to conceal, he gave his beloved young lady the following recital; Lady Widdrington chusing to withdraw, until he had concluded it.

"When I had the misfortune," said he, "to lose my dear master, instead of giving myself up to a despair, that could be of no service to the living or the dead, I determined either to sell my life very dearly to the enemy, or if possible to save it, that I might still be of use to my Lord's children. The unhappy contest over, I disguised my-

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self as a peasant, and came to fix in this neighbourhood, finding that you and Lady Genevieve, as your uncle's wards, were to be brought hither. This I thought strange, knowing the high opinion my Lord had always entertained of his eldest daughter's prudence, so capable of directing her own and her sister's actions; and could not but suspect some foul play, respecting the will said to be written and left here by him. I had never heard of his making any will; and my doubts confirmed me in my design of continuing near this place, to render you all the service in my power.

"But as your uncle, if conscious of any deception, would surely not have suffered me to approach you, I carefully maintained my disguise, and had the good fortune to be entertained as a labouring servant by one John Nottage, a vassal of my Lord's, one of whose daughters was just gone to live as an inferior servant in the castle. This was a lucky circumstance for me; for she frequently walked over to see her parents;

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parents; and from her talk to them, which they often repeated as we all sat together at meat, I gathered many particulars of use for me to know, while I ran no hazard of being discovered by her, because I left the castle just before she went to live there. By these means I learned your arrival, and the strict conditions of your dear father's will, which Scruton had mentioned, and which were much spoken of amongst the domestics. I was convinced the whole was a forgery, being morally certain my Lord had made no will at all; for he had often said to me, that, in case of the worst, meaning his being slain, his personal property would of course devolve to his children; and that your own discretion was the best guard to which he could commit either yourself or his youngest daughter. So I remained close in my concealment, and lent an attentive ear to all I could learn relating to your situation; till, chancing to hear from Nottage's girl what apartment you

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slept in, and your cautious uncle's contrivance of a spring-trap in his chamber, to prevent your ever leaving your own room at night without his knowledge, I thought I would venture to make use of a key I had of the side entrance, near the stables, to let myself into the castle, and endeavour to speak to you, for I wished to communicate to you my suspicions of the forgery.

"I should not have feared revealing myself to Lady Rachel, knowing her character to be so worthy; but we were told she had made a vow to confine herself for a whole year, as an expiation of her brother's dying in rebellion; and though I doubted the truth of that story also, her seclusion, whatever was its cause, effectually hindered me from making myself known to her."

"Why, Kendrew, did you doubt the truth of that story?" said Margiana.

"I thought it unlikely a woman of such enlightened good sense should condemn herself to be useless to her family for so long

long a time. And it was improbable too that she should have contracted so very strong a liking for my Lord, though he was her brother, during the little while he spent with her, for he was scarcely three weeks at Widdrington Tower, and they had hardly ever met before.

"So, as I was saying, I had no chance of applying to her; and as I always lay in an outhouse, I could go abroad any night without being missed, if I only took care to be in again before morning. Accordingly, I wrapt myself in a long cloak, and carrying a lanthorn underneath it, I introduced myself into the castle; but not daring to approach your chamber through the armoury, for fear of the spring-trap, I softly made my way into the room that I knew lay on the other side of your's, and which I recollected was in one part divided from it by a thin wooden partition. With a sharp knife, I cut out of this a large pannel; and, luckily for me, the night being stormy, the noise I made was not loud enough to dis-

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turb you. The loose arras hangings concealed from your room what I was doing; but I had no sooner worked myself a passage, than the want of oil in my lanthorn warned me to be gone. Replacing, therefore, the pannel, I hurried back the way I came, and a few nights after repeated my attempt, having provided myself with a few lines in writing, to leave for you, in case I was prevented by any accident from coming to the speech of you.

"I found the pannel just as I had left it, and, passing through the opening, and hearing all was still, I lifted up the hangings, so as to have a free view into your apartment; but I discovered you had not yet come to it for the night. I waited, therefore, in my place of concealment, and very soon had the satisfaction of hearing you enter; but that accursed woman Joyce was with you, as I saw from under a corner of the arras."

"Why do you call her by such a name, Kendrew? What has *she* done?"

"She

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"She has aided and abetted your uncle, dear Lady, in all his schemes; and she knew"—here Kendrew checked himself—"as much as her husband did, of his forged will, and his design against little Hengist.

"I kept close, till I thought she was gone to rest; for I was not sure but she might be in the habit of returning to take away your lamp. So I waited, and saw you reach down a book; and after you had read awhile, hearing no noise in the castle, I believed I might step forward, making myself sure you would know me at the first word I spoke. But, no doubt, you fancied me that villain Scruton, coming to murder—no, not to murder, but to frighten you; for you fled away like a lapwing, and I heard you run through the armoury, and along the passage; whereupon I made no question but your uncle, who was probably gone to his chamber, would be alarmed, and would instantly hasten to your room with some of his people. So, as no time was to be lost, I thrust the paper I had

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brought into the leaves of your book; but fearing your uncle might look into it, I put it by upon the shelves, and made the best of my way out of the castle, not without hopes you would see what I had written, and would come down into the vaults.

"But after being there several nights, for I dared not alarm you by returning a second time to your apartment, I began to fear you had never seen enough of my hand-writing to recollect it again, and that you apprehended some snare from your uncle or Scruton.

"I was never disturbed during my subterranean watches, but once, when I heard some heavy steps advancing so suddenly, that I was fain to leave my cloak behind me, and escape. But the greatest danger I ever was in of being discovered, was one night when I had come to the castle rather too soon, and, lurking in one of the passages, in hopes of seeing you, I perceived a young lady coming towards me, whom I took for your very self; but I was disappointed.

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pointed. It was not you. I believed it was your sister; but I was afraid of trusting any body else."

"It *was* my dear sister," said Margiana, "She mentioned the circumstance to me long after; but had she done so at the time, neither of us *then* would have suspected you."

Kendrew bowed, but returned no answer to this observation.

"Soon after," he continued, "I had the great pleasure of being serviceable to Lady Widdrington; but the whole of that concern she herself will chuse to relate to you. I will therefore proceed to say, that after assisting her to escape from her confinement, I was honoured by the permission of attending her to London, from whence I hoped very soon to return; but I was there unluckily recognised by some Lancastrians, who swore to me as a person who had been

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very active in the cause of King Richard, and I was consequently thrown into prison. However, after I had been detained there several months, the keeper of it, fortunately for me, died, and a countryman of my own succeeded to his office.

"It was not difficult for me to prevail upon this man to connive at my escape; and I no sooner regained my liberty than I posted back hither, hoping to be more successful in my future attempts to speak with you. I became still more sanguine, when Lord Widdrington set out for Wales. However, I gave up the idea of meeting you in the vaults, having so often watched for you there in vain; but, hearing you frequently walked to the burying-place, I resolved to hazard a letter, inviting you to meet me there. I dared not name myself, as I was sure that Scruton, knowing what intelligence I had it in my power to give you, would raise all the vassals of his Lord to hunt me down, should it be suspected I was

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in the country. Yet I ventured to mention a childish ballad, that I thought would remind you of me.

"This letter I carried one evening to your chamber, when all the family were engaged at supper; but to prevent its coming under the observation of your spies, I concealed it in the same book I had made use of before, which I drew out of its place, to fix your attention.

"The meeting that followed, some time after, I need not recal to your remembrance. It will always be in mine. I had never been happy before, since my dear master died. But I paid heavily for my pleasure, when I found myself disappointed in my hope of seeing you again; and, after a night spent in restless anxiety, heard the report that you had secretly fled from the castle. It was conjectured you was gone to London; and thither I went in pursuit of you; and after a considerable time spent in fruitless inquiries, I returned here, supposing that this would probably be the first place where

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you would be heard of. For, notwithstanding what was held out, I could not believe, after the few words I had exchanged with you in the burying-place, that you had voluntarily gone away without me.

"But all my hopes died away by degrees; and I then became careless of my life. Indeed I thought there was nothing worth living for, since I could no longer be serviceable to you; and perhaps too desperately threw myself into the service of Lord March and Sir Hugh Mortimer, out of anxiousness to oppose your uncle in any way I could. The news of your unexpected return made me persevere for your relief; and when the rebels had succeeded in forcing the castle, and marched towards Lord Percy's camp, I followed in their train, still keeping an observant eye upon your uncle, though, as you always rode near him, I forbore to approach you; but resolved, in case he persisted to enforce your marriage with his son against your will,

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will, to give you all the information in my power.

"At the time you separated from him, and retired to Lady Percy, I was so much employed, by Sir Hugh Mortimer, that I never had an opportunity of speaking with you; but you was first in my thoughts when the action was over; and when, upon inquiry, I found which road you had taken with Harold Wallop, I pursued you; but a slight hurt I had received from a spear-head proving very troublesome, I made for the first light I saw to apply a bandage to it; and was just about to remount my horse, and proceed to inquire further at the village beyond the ruined house, when I beheld your precious face! You must have quitted the high road, for I certainly had passed you.

"Such have been poor old Kendrew's adventures, my dear young Lady, since you lost the best father, and I the best master, that ever lived. But now, I trust, I am laid up

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up in a resting-place for the remainder of my life.

"You will observe, I have omitted in my story all that concerns Lady Widdrington. She knows exactly how it fell in my way to assist her, and what I was lucky enough to do will come properly into the account she wishes to give you herself of what has befallen her."

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

Innocence protected by Virtue.

MARGIANA had a pleasure in expressing to her faithful old servant all the gratitude she felt for the anxiety and trouble he had undergone for her sake; and she assured him his desire of spending the rest of his days in her sevice could not be stronger than her own to retain him with her. She asked him some further questions respecting the menaces her uncle had thrown out against the infant son of Lady Rothes, and understood that, though not publicly made, they had once, in an unguarded moment, been

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been inadvertently dropped in the hearing of Lady Widdrington.

The fact, which Kendrew had been cautioned not to reveal, was, that Bertram, furious and desperate, at the moment of being detected by his wife in the bloody chamber, had braved her power of becoming a witness against him, by threats of the most cruel confinement, and impious oaths, that the child whom Lady Rothes professed to have been born in lawful wedlock should not long survive its hated father. Instead of mentioning these particulars, Kendrew only observed, that Lady Widdrington, with so much horror, reprobated all idea of any attempt against the boy, that her husband, well acquainted with her courage and resolution in a right cause, had confined, and even inhumanly treated her, to prevent her interference.

Margiana then recollected the remote apartment, the iron cage, and the torn paper.

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paper. But it was strange, she thought, if the hand-writing was really Lady Widdrington's, that it had not been recognised by Harold Wallop. This, with some other doubts, still perplexed her; but she looked to her aunt's narrative for a dispersion of them all, and soon claimed the promised communication.

"After what you have heard from Kendrew," said Lady Widdrington, "much does not remain for me to tell you; but as it is chiefly in his favour, I had rather be the relater of it myself, than leave it to him, who would dwell very modestly on his own merits. Nothing I shall ever be able to do for the worthy creature can repay the obligation I lie under to him. I grieve, that while doing justice to his kindness, I must bring the heavy charge of cruelty against another, whom I fain would once have honoured; but all that I say must be confined within your own bosom.

"I will

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"I will not dwell upon the circumstances that made my Lord think it necessary to deprive me of my liberty. You have been already sufficiently apprised of them by Kendrew, whom I desired to relieve me from that part of the task. It is enough for me to observe, that I was immediately forced into a distant chamber at the top of the castle; and, to give a colour of probability to the tale that I find was spread of my having made a vow of seclusion, I was committed to the keeping of the priest, Father Geoffry, who was the only person that had access to me, your uncle alone excepted.

"By each of these I was constantly solicited to bind myself by oath never to take any measures for thwarting my Lord's designs against his infant nephew, and never to discover any thing I knew in his own disfavour. This concession was proposed as the price of my freedom; but I preferred captivity, though it was embittered to me by

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by various modes of punishment inflicted by the priest, at the command, however, I fear, of his Lord.

" My knowledge of both their characters allowed me little room to hope; and I could not expect an interference in my favour from any one but my son, who, I concluded, would be with the most assiduous care deceived. The place of my confinement was so distant from every inhabited room of the castle, save that occupied by Father Geoffry himself, that it was very rarely any mortal sound reached my ear. But, one gloomy evening, I heard a person coughing violently in the chamber beneath mine, wherein my unfortunate and lamented brother had formerly slept. Though without expectation of relief, a natural instinct prompted me to give warning that a wretched being was above; and I threw down a heavy stone bottle, the only article of furniture in the apartment, excepting my straw bed. But nothing ensued; and I concluded that I must shortly perish, owing to the sufferings

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I was made to endure, and the very scanty supply of food I received. I fear, my dear Margiana, I was a less patient prisoner than yourself. I more than once endeavoured to awaken pity and remorse in my husband's bosom; for the priest furnished me with the means of writing to him; but compassion dwelt not in his nature, and the season for remorse was not arrived.

"At length, my deliverer appeared; and I must now explain to you how Kendrew became possessed of the means of setting me free. The better to guard against a discovery of the truth, Lord Widdrington, it seems, obliged my own woman to join in the deception he was practising. He probably thought it would not be believed that I should seclude myself, without a female attendant. He forced her, under pain of the severest punishment, to confirm the account he chose to give of me. She accordingly represented me as confining myself in a chamber very distant from the one that really was my prison; and, as I have since heard,

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heard, was induced, by her fears of torture, even to delude my son, by giving him various answers to letters he had wrote, as if returned by me. This she could easily do, for she had lived with me from a child, and as I had myself taught her to write, her hand bore the strongest resemblance to mine. However, she did not prove so faithful a confidant to my Lord but that she intimated to a servant girl under her that Father Geoffry was in fact less my confessor and comforter than my gaoler, for that I was a captive in a remote chamber, of which he kept the key. The girl, though sworn to secrecy, could not contain what she knew. She was the daughter of that John Nottage for whom your old servant worked; and probably the next time she visited her parents, she dropt more than hints of what had been revealed to her.

"Thus Kendrew became informed of my real situation; and the feelings it excited in his heart did not spend themselves in unavailing compassion. He resolved to act vigorously

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vigorously in my behalf; and knowing that old Geoffry went often to Warkworth to confess his penitents, and sometimes returned home late at night, he one evening lay in wait for him, and, observing him crossing a large field alone, he went up to him, and told him he was come for the key of that chamber where I was confined.

"Geoffry, of course, denying it was in his possession, the sturdy old warrior knocked him down, and, searching his garments, took it from him; but did not quit the spot till he had effectually taken care he should not rise without assistance, or be able to reach the castle before I was set at liberty. He confessed to me, that he beat and bruised him without mercy or remorse. But the guilt of this, if guilt there was, his next kind action fully expiated.

"Leaving his groaning victim, he hastened on to the Tower; and by the time he arrived there, the night had become nearly dark enough for his purpose. However, he

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he concealed himself till it was likely my Lord and all the domestics were gone to rest. He then, by means of his own key, entered the building, and, being well acquainted with the interior of it, and having gathered from Nottage's daughter the situation of my prison room, he readily made his way to it; for he never risked any of his nocturnal visits without previously providing himself with the means of obtaining a light, in case, he said, any event should fall out to favour your escaping from your uncle.

"I was waked by the noise, unwonted at such an hour, of my door being cautiously opened. But a very different voice from that of either of my oppressors immediately relieved my apprehensions of a sudden death. Calling me by my name, Kendrew declared a friend was come to relieve me; and on my answering, he urged me to rise with all haste and be gone, for that he was ready to see me safe to any part of the world I chose to repair to. He then told me

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me who he was; and I felt my deliverance certain at the sound of his name.

"Praising God for a blessing so unlooked for, I did as he desired me; and as I always slept in a part of my clothes, for fear of surprisals, I was soon ready. I once thought of leaving a few lines for my Lord; and actually wrote them, but afterwards, reflecting they could answer no good purpose, I destroyed the paper.

"As we were leaving that dismal room, I asked Kendrew if my nieces were at the castle, and how they were treated? 'Ill enough!' was his reply. I then inquired where they slept? and understanding from him that Genevieve's chamber lay through that occupied by Scruton and Joyce, but that you was the principal object of your uncle's suspicious tyranny, I conceived a sudden wish to make you the partner of my flight.

"As we reached the end of the passage that leads to the armoury, Kendrew stopping,

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ping, to shelter his light from a gust of wind that blew up from the great staircase, I stepped forward, directing him to wait for me an instant; and not being aware of the invention of the loose flag acting upon a machine in my Lord's room, thought only of calling you, and urging you to be gone with us. Lest you should condemn my imprudence as greater than it really was, I must observe to you, that my Lord had changed his apartment, probably to be near you; for he had never before slept in that quarter of the castle. But, alas! my rashness had nearly cost my companion his life, and ruined myself. At the noise made by the spring, my husband rushed from his chamber, and Kendrew advancing at the same moment with his lamp, he saw and recognised us both. He was armed with a dagger, and putting me aside with one hand, he aimed with the other a mortal blow at Kendrew. But Kendrew was not to be so easily overcome. He parried the stroke, and a struggle ensued, which ended in my

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Lord's being stretched across the passage. Apprehending, however, that he was only stunned, and might soon rise and create an alarm, Kendrew almost forced me away, and hurried me out of the castle, and across the park, into the woods, which, under favour of the night, we reached in safety. Here, assuring me he would return for you as soon as I was out of Bertram's reach, he suffered me to proceed more deliberately, till he drew near Nottage's house, where, awaking the man and his wife, he charged me to fear nothing, for they would befriend us. I found them indeed not merely willing, but even anxious, to serve me; and, by Kendrew's advice, I dressed myself in a complete suit of the honest woman's clothes, while her husband assisted the old man in preparing a light covered cart, and two horses, to take us some miles on the Carlisle road; and Nottage himself made ready to go with us, and bring the horses back.

"Every thing was so promptly done, that

that in less than half an hour I was lifted into the cart, and left the worthy woman delighted at having rendered a service, as she said, to her oppressed Lady; and certain that she as well as her husband would, for their own sakes, observe the strictest secrecy.

"We reached a small town, fifteen miles on the western road, before daybreak; and as I was taken for a country woman, I attracted no observation. We here parted from the friendly Nottage, and, procuring some stronger horses, proceeded a little further, but more rapidly, in the same direction, when we turned aside into the south road, which, after several days journey, brought us in safety to London.

"There, my first care was to send Kendrew to Lady Rothes, to acquaint her with the danger that menaced her little boy; and she, well recollecting the confidential servant of her departed friend, paid ready attention to his caution. She determined

to send the intended innocent victim to Rothes Castle, in Scotland; but seeming averse to go thither herself, Kendrew, by my direction, informed her he could recommend a kinswoman of his own, to whose care Hengist might be safely confided. Upon this, she sent for me, and, not to detain you longer than is necessary, a day was appointed for my setting out with the child, escorted by Kendrew, who was very desirous of returning, to be near you, after he had seen me safe at my new place of destination.

"But, in the meantime, he was unfortunately seen by and known to some fiery partizans of the King, who remembered how active he had been in the service of the late insurgent nobles; and by them he was thrown into confinement. Lady Rothes, therefore, who knew me by no other name than that of Dame Elizabeth, appointed her own steward to supply Kendrew's place; and I arrived securely with my young

young charge in that distant region, which you also was so soon after compelled to visit.

"Here I led a safe, a peaceful, and not unpleasant life; attached to the infant, whom I loved not only as my brother's child, but as a helpless being whom I had proved the instrument of Providence to preserve. I endeavoured to do my duty in cherishing his health, and promoting his improvement, and received a delight from the performance of it. But how was I rewarded for all, when, beneath the name and disguise of a page, I beheld my dear wild Arlette, escaped from her father's unnatural bondage! The sight of her gave me so much happiness, I was not able to quarrel with the means that procured it to me, though I easily made her ashamed of her strange deviation from that propriety of conduct which is or ought to be the pride of woman as well as man. Luckily for her, Lord Lothian had himself destroyed the impression he had so suddenly made on her

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childish fancy. But for the confinement in which she had lived, he had probably never attracted her notice; and her natural notions of rectitude and delicacy made her view him with dislike and disgust, on a further knowledge of his character. I had therefore no lurking partiality to contend with; and Arlette, enjoying all reasonable liberty, and suffering no other restrictions than what she herself admitted to be just, soon became, in my partial estimation, all a mother could desire.

"I was convinced of the permanency of her reformation, by the care with which she avoided Lord Lothian, when he visited Rothes Castle, some months after, and her averseness that even you should be informed of her past indiscretion; for I did not conceal from her the captivity and the sufferings you had endured. By her own desire, therefore, during the time of your convalescence, I sent her to visit a respectable neighbour. She said she feared you more than any one, because you had no weaknesses

weaknesses of your own, to render you indulgent to those of others, and was without the natural partiality that made me lenient.

"I did not combat her shyness, by representing that you would certainly learn the whole of her former conduct from your sister; for I did not wish her to overcome the shame she felt too quickly. And I could not but fear her being recognised by Lord Lothian in her own character, as the supposed youth who had attended him so long.

"I am sincere when I say, that the friendship I formed for you during the short interval we spent together, was such as made me very sensible of your departure. I wished I could have returned with you; and my heart panted to be once more folded in the arms of my beloved son. But having gathered from you the unchanged situation of affairs at this place, I resolved to suppress my anxiety, and wait for a more favourable season.

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"The patience that Providence endowed me with, it has also been pleased to reward. I had not much longer to wait. Kendrew, a second time to me the messenger of good, brought me word that my dear Ethelred entreated my return. And though I was shocked to find my husband had become a rebel to the sovereign he had formerly assisted to raise to that dignity, I felt, and still feel, hopes that he will be pardoned. Delancey is highly and deservedly valued by the King, and for his sake, offences may perchance be overlooked, that, but for him, could not be forgiven."

Margiana, after expressing to Lady Widdrington the admiration she thought due to her fortitude and perseverance, and her sense of the obligation under which she had laid her infant brother, related to her the conversation she had held with Joyce in the brown tapestry chamber, when she heard the noise overhead that had thrown that wicked woman into momentary confusion.

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She then mentioned the subsequent anxiety that led her to explore the chamber above. But when she would have spoken of the iron cage, her voice faltered; and Lady Widdrington, observing it, turned pale.

"I see, Margiana," said she, "you have combined circumstances that have informed you further than, for your uncle's credit's sake, could have been wished. But Father Geoffry, who always was the inflictor of what I suffered, is no doubt entitled to much of the blame. He it was who locked me, for five and sometimes for seven hours, every other day, in that dreadful cage you must have seen."

"And beneath which," said Margiana, "I found this torn fragment, that I have ever since preserved, hoping the mystery attending it might be one day explained. From the sad tale you have told, I should have supposed it written by you, had not the hand been unknown to Harold Wallop."

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Lady Widdrington looked at it.—" This indeed is part of what I wrote," said she; " and I cannot wonder he did not recollect the hand to be mine; yet I took no pains to disguise it."

" Why then, my dear aunt——" Margiana stopt, but her eyes continued the question she would have asked.

" Sometimes, I am apt to think Father Geoffry exceeded the authority vested in him. More than once, to break, he said, the stubborn spirit that rose against a husband's will, not satisfied with the punishment of the cage, he inflicted another much more acute. He applied a small iron instrument, called a thumb-screw, to each of my fingers in turn; and after awhile they became so crippled, that it was with much difficulty I made any use of them at all. If you have a curiosity to know the whole of my address to my Lord, I can gratify it; for, after I had effected my escape, I found I had unknowingly slipt the other fragment of what I had written into my sleeve, in-

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stead of having thrown them both down; and I have kept it ever since, as a memorial of my sufferings and deliverance.

Lady Widdrington rose, and, opening a small cabinet in the room where they were sitting, gave the relic to Margiana, who, joining it to her own, read as follows:

"You inflict tortures in vain. I will be resolute, and not all that you and the infernal Geoffry can devise shall ever force me to bind myself by the oath you require. Whatever human nature can endure, I will bear; but know, I fly to preserve the innocent Hengist the instant I regain my liberty; and, far from the reach of your cruelty, shall live in peace, while maddening remorse wrings your guilty bosom."

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"Alas!" cried Margiana; "alas, for the wickedness of man! And what, dear Lady, is become of this vile Geoffry? I have never either seen or heard of him since we returned from Shrewsbury."

"I am told," replied Lady Widdrington, "he quitted not only this castle, but even the country, as soon as he discovered that Delancey was likely to become the master here, in consequence of his father's being a prisoner. Scruton and his wife, who were also in the guilty secret, would no doubt have done the same, had they not been in good time secured. They now lie at the mercy of my son; and if mercy he can shew them, consistently with justice, I make no question but he will."

While these conversations were passing at Widdrington Tower, Lord Delancey, burying the secret of his father's blackest guilt deeply in his own bosom, even from Harold Wallop, was anxiously engaged in imploring the King to pardon the less criminal

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criminal act of rebellion, which he represented the Earl to have been forced into by Sir Hugh Mortimer and his nephew. Those two leaders Henry had forgiven, remitting, as he termed it, all further punishment, since each had virtually lost his head when Harry Percy died; and, upon these grounds, Ethelred hoped his father also might escape an ignominious death. But he found the King strongly, and, in his opinion, unaccountably prejudiced. Henry bade him be told, for he would not suffer him to address himself upon the occasion, that he positively refused to bind himself by any promise; and that only Ethelred's steady loyalty, and the services he had rendered him throughout the whole of the late rebellion, had hitherto preserved his father from the scaffold.

"It is in our own breast," pursued the sovereign, "to punish or to pardon, as we see fit; and as we have our reasons for extending a hand of mercy to Lord March and

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and old Mortimer, so we may have causes, unknown to any but ourselves, for judging Bertram of Widdrington undeserving of the like lenity. Yet, for the love we bear Delancey, we will take time for further consideration, before he be condemned."

With this answer, as it was all he could obtain, though the Prince of Wales himself condescended to plead for him, Lord Delancey was forced to be content; and he was spared the pain the sight of his wretched parent would have given him, by a strict order, which the Warden of the Tower punctually obeyed, not to admit any person whatever to see the miserable Bertram.

Another concern, during Ethelred's stay in London, engaged some part of his attention. Lady Rothes talked publicly, and in very high terms, of the usurpation of his father and himself, in assuming titles, and appropriating lands, to which they had no pretensions;

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pretensions; since the late Earl of Widdrington, besides his two daughters, had left to inherit his honours and wealth, a son, born of a marriage which took place between him and herself, at Edgehill, the summer before he died. Many persons were convinced, by her lofty tone and solemn asseverations; and the tale was beginning to obtain such extensive credit, that Ethelred felt it to be a duty owing either to young Hengist, or to his father and himself, to demand such proofs as were in her power to bring forward.

But as a personal interview with Lady Rothes, on business of such a nature, would have been a very unpleasant task to him, his friend Harold readily undertook it for him; and, upon soliciting a conference with the Lady, was immediately admitted. The society of neither of these, however, being highly valued by the other, his visit was a very short one. He told her he came at the request of Lord Delancey, or Ethelred Winburne,

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Winburne, whichever he might be, to receive from her own mouth an assurance of her being, or not being, the widow of his late uncle.

"If he be dead," replied she, "I am his widow; if he be living, I am his wife."

"You was *really*, then, married to him?"

"If the man who married us was really a priest."

"Pardon me, Lady Rothes. I would not be rude, and rude it is to doubt a Lady's word. I entreat you, therefore, to remove *my* doubts, by producing *your* proofs. Where, I pray you, was the ceremony performed? and who was the priest that married you?"

"The ceremony was performed in the chapel in old Castles's house, and the priest was Daniel Lazinby, of Edgehill."

"And is he living there now?"

"No; he is dead. You must make what advantage you can of that."

"And

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"And was there no other witness of your marriage?"

"Yes; Clara Castles."

"Clara, now the wife of William Scroope? And where, I pray you, Lady, is she?"

"Be that your affair to find out, Wallop; it will be a little amusement for you. But if you can contrive to let her know your friend is in London, married as she is, I should not question her coming hither very readily. And when you can address your inquiries to her, prithee let me hear no more of them, for, in good sooth, they are marvellously tiresome."

Wallop, on leaving this flighty woman, made it his business to discover where Scroope and his wife actually were; and hearing they resided at Edgehill, with her uncle, he went thither without loss of time; and, as Lord Delancey's friend, met with a very courteous reception.

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On his acquainting Clara with the nature of his errand, she smiled, and said, "You come too late, brave Harold. I am engaged on the other side."

"I hope you are engaged on the side of truth," said he; "and truth is all I want to hear. If you really witnessed the marriage ceremony between the late Earl of Widdrington and the Countess of Rothes, there is no reason why you should not make oath of the same."

"Aye! but the worthy Lady you mention would persuade me to make oath of it, whether I did or not. The fact is, Wallop, about an hour before you arrived, there came here a trusty servant of Lady Rothes's, her steward, whom your favourite Margiana can testify upon occasion to have been a very useful agent, and an agreeable fellow traveller over the Highlands. All that story is pretty public now. This man came with the most brilliant offers of his Lady's interest, and her brother's also, with the King, in favour of my husband, to put him in possession

possession of certain estates that belonged to his late kinsman, Lord Latimer, in consideration of my rendering her the slight service of perjuring myself, and deposing that I was present at her marriage with the deceased Earl of Widdrington; at the same time that I was entreated to forget the former difference that subsisted between us.

"But having already, I am ashamed to say, occasioned too much uneasiness to your excellent friend, which I hope, as he has himself felt the force of love, he has already pardoned me for; besides lying under signal obligations to him, both in my own person and in that of my husband; God forbid I should do him any further injury, even putting all fear of incurring guilt out of the question. I protest to you, Lady Rothes was not, to my knowledge, married to Lord Widdrington; and I am decidedly of opinion she *never* was. After hearing from her steward a pompous display of her proffered services, I bade him return, and tell his Lady from me, she had better become an honest

honest woman, as I had done; since, at her years, she could not reasonably expect to live a great while longer. But that, if she was anxious to establish the fact of a marriage having been celebrated in our little chapel, I could be of infinite use to her, having actually witnessed one there, no longer ago than last week. Step this way," pursued Clara, laying hold of Wallop's arm, "and I will shew you an object that, if you be an admirer of beauty, and a lover of justice, cannot fail to give you pleasure."

She led him out, under the little rustic porch that sheltered the front door; from whence, looking towards the bottom of the garden, he beheld a very lovely young woman sitting on a bench, at work, by the side of the brook.

"I am sure," resumed Clara, "that, for Lady Rothes's sake, you will be agreeably surprised when I inform you that fair recluse is no other than the young pensioner Clothilde,

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Clothilde, whom you have no doubt heard Delancey speak of.

"As soon as Lord Lothian could be safely moved, after receiving what was long believed to be his death's wound, he was, by my husband's care, brought here, where Clothilde had already been sometime before him. Our joint care and good nursing soon re-established his health; and on Tuesday last, the pretty foreigner became Countess of Lothian. I charged the honest steward to report this agreeable news, without fail, to his Lady; though it is possible she may already have received it from her brother himself, who yesterday morning left us for a few days, and will probably visit his sister before his return."

All Wallop's former dislike of Clara vanished at this testimony of her present good disposition; and he expressed his unqualified approbation, with assurances of Lord Delancey's future friendship, and his own pleasure,

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pleasure, at the just mortification Lady Rothes would receive.

The high spirits he was in made his company so pleasant, that he was much pressed to prolong his stay, both by Clara herself and William Scroope, as well as her uncle. But he was too impatient to see his friend again, to comply with their request. He made the best of his way, therefore, back to London, and, by his information, fully satisfied Lord Delancey that he had nothing to apprehend on the score of Lady Rothes.

Soon after, Ethelred, finding that his further residence in London could be of no avail to his father, and that a variety of domestic concerns required his presence at Widdrington Tower, gave way to the earnest wishes of his heart, to return to the beloved society of his mother and Margiana. He was very desirous that Wallop should accompany him, and Wallop was equally anxious

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anxious to go; but the King, at that time, had need of him, though he promised him an early leave of absence.

Lord Delancey, accordingly, set out alone, in the hope their separation would be but short; and was received with rapture by his mother, and a consciousness of joy by Margiana, that spread confusion over her fine face. This was observed by Lady Widdrington, and impressed her with ideas, which her niece's silence, seeming, as it did, to proceed from a fear of saying too much, strongly served to confirm.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VII.

The Sting of Death is Sin.

The propensities of the human heart are most clearly seen in the quiet circle of domestic duties. The character then wears no holyday garb; and those truths are brought to light which sometimes, in concerns of moment, are concealed. Lady Widdrington's partiality for her young and amiable companions rendered her extremely attentive to whatever might develope their sentiments; and less penetration than she possessed would have sufficed to convince her, that of all the three, Arlette alone was really happy.

That

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That Delancey's noble heart still sunk oppressed beneath the heavy consciousness of his father's ignominy and guilt, could not surprise her; but Lady Widdrington fancied she could discern this was not the only subject of affliction that preyed upon his spirits, and undermined his peace. She thought she beheld in him traces of the deep roots of an unsubdued passion, which still stubbornly held their ground, and were painfully twisted round the fibres of his heart. Once that passion had yielded to the introduction of a foreign sentiment; but it had yielded only while its own beloved object was supposed to be no more. She was now restored to his society and his affection;—but *how* restored? Her sister had been his wife; and Margiana, though once more alive to his friendship, was still dead to his love.

"Virtue herself," said Lady Widdrington to him, "must mourn the degeneracy of your father; but remember, that Virtue

always places bounds to her grief. The tarnished lustre of the name of Widdrington it belongs to you to restore. *You* have never sullied it; and though your father has proved himself unworthy of his line, your mother, I presume to say, never brought disgrace on his or on her own. Be happy, my dearest Ethelred, in an honest consciousness of your own worth, in the unlimited love of that parent you can look up to without a blush, and in the affection of *two* sisters, whose tenderness can only be equalled by the warm friendship of our favourite Wallop."

"Best of mothers!" cried Delancey, "I am sensible of the blessings you have named. I am resigned—I hope I am—to the will of Heaven; but henceforward, if I would have happiness, I must adopt your's, and that of my other friends, and call it mine; for it can never more be inborn with me."

"And why *never*, Delancey? Must a virtuous child be for *ever* unhappy, because he has a guilty parent? The remembrance of

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of his crime, since it is unknown to others, will expire with us."

"It will so. But there *may* be another source of regret. You *may* unconsciously have touched upon it, even when enumerating my causes of content. But no more of this. Let us, my dearest mother, do what is right, and receive resignedly what God is pleased to send us."

After this conversation, while Delancey's heart was bleeding, he affected a calm, and even a chearful exterior, in his mother's presence; but the secret dejection he laboured under was seen by Margiana, and penetrated her with a sentiment to which she had hitherto been a stranger. That she herself in any degree occasioned it, was the idea of all others most remote from her mind; and she cherished the interest Ethelred now created in her bosom, because she believed it unconnected with and remote from the nature of love. She felt an in-

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sidious delight in assisting Lady Widdrington to soothe, and the gay Arlette to enliven, his hours of retirement spent in the midst of his family, and fancied, could she have forgotten the loss of Genevieve, nothing but the return of Wallop would be wanting to re-establish the peaceful content of the party.

Sometimes, when expressing her desire to see Harold again, she was interrupted by Lady Widdrington, who told her that only *her* hand could reward the many excellencies of that worthy young man. But Margiana, with all her friendship for him, shrinking from the idea, would reply, "Oh, no! Can he exist, on whom *that* hand can be bestowed which once was withheld from Delancey?"

At length, the man so deservedly valued was seen approaching the castle. Ethelred, who was on horseback in the park, galloped forward

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forward to meet him; but his ardour received a sudden check, on observing the countenance of his friend.

"Dismount, Delancey," said Harold. "Order one of your people to take our horses, and let us walk. I have much to say to you."

"Say it quickly then, dear Harold! Your looks speak melancholy things. What of my father?"

"Oh, Ethelred! can he be the father of a son like you? I shall strike a dagger to your heart, I know, when I tell you his guilt is divulged."

"His guilt, Wallop! You mean—you mean his rebellion?"

"No, no! I mean your uncle."

Delancey stopt, turned from him, and groaned in bitterness of anguish. His friend was silent for some minutes, and then said—"I see you know it all. I combat not your grief; it is just and natural; yet let not shame render it galling

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to your soul. The crime is known only to the King and myself, besides the two persons who revealed it to him; and for your's and your mother's sake, we have bound ourselves by oath to secrecy. Nor can your father ever agonize either of you more. My dear Delancey—he is dead!"

The pious son fell on Harold's shoulder, and wept.

The conversation that followed was incoherent, and feebly supported by Wallop, who was scarcely interrupted by his friend. "Particulars," he said, "he would not give, till he was more composed to hear them. And from your mother," pursued he, "unless she already knows the worst, they ought to be concealed. To you, therefore, when we can be alone, I will be more explicit. In the meantime, let not her or Margiana conjecture more from your appearance than the sorrow naturally felt at the loss of a parent."

While

While they were yet speaking, Wallop saw Lady Widdrington, Margiana, and Arlette, advancing to meet and welcome him. Ethelred started at the sight.—"Go to them, Harold," said he. "I will be with you again after awhile." And then, hastening from his friend, he plunged into the woods, where he remained long alone. From what he had heard, he apprehended that his father had died beneath the stroke of the executioner; and attributed to Wallop's tenderness for his feelings, his not having made a direct mention of the manner of his death. He fervently prayed that it might expiate the guilty past; and at length became sufficiently master of himself to return to the castle, with the expression of horror his features had lately worn composed to that of decent sorrow.

Wallop, in the meanwhile, had accounted for his absence, by gently breaking to Lady Widdrington, in the presence of her daughter and niece, a part of what had

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passed between them. He acquainted them that Bertram was no more; but suffered them to suppose he had died a natural death in the Tower, reserving a complete explanation until he should be private with Delancey. The news was immediately made known throughout the castle, where respect for their Ladies and their beloved young Lord, rather than any reverence for the memory of the departed, produced a shew of grief in the domestics. But Lady Widdrington's affliction was more than shew. Her husband had probably been called to his Creator in an unrepentant state, and she dreaded to hear the particulars of his last hours.

Arlette might be said to be shocked at the suddenness of the event, rather than grieved; for, ever since her brother's return, the King's pardon had been expected; and Margiana, who had the least cause for regret, turned her whole attention to assist Wallop in speaking consolation to the mother and son.

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But he had not yet acquainted either of them with the worst. At night, when Margiana and Arlette retired, Delancey, assuring him that concealment from Lady Widdrington was unnecessary, conducted him to her apartment; and there Wallop fully informed her and his friend of the whole dreadful concern.

From his recital it appeared, that while the King wavered with respect to pardoning or punishing Lord Widdrington, the two chiefs to whom that nobleman's guilt was known conceived it their duty to terminate his irresolution, by apprising him of the horrid spectacle they had seen, when by force of arms they had broke into the secret chamber, and beheld his brother's unburied remains. "The King listened to them," continued Harold, "with much stronger symptoms of indignation than surprise; and as soon as they quitted his presence, he sent for me; and knowing the intimacy I was

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honoured with by this family, questioned me upon the subject.

"I had no occasion to pretend ignorance. His Highness was so convinced of mine being real, that he believed, and still believes, Lord Delancey himself unacquainted with the fatal truth.

'Be it your task,' said he, 'Wallop, to break it to him. It is the office of a friend, and you will perform it gently; for it is right he should know all.' The King then," pursued Harold, "explained a circumstance to me, which, soon after it happened, gave me much uneasiness, and excited in my mind many and strange conjectures. During that troubled interval that followed the defeat of the rebels at Cirencester, when you, Ethelred, was absent from London, your cousins saw at court, apparently descending from a private conference with the King, a stranger, whose peculiar manner of noticing them greatly attracted their attention. Lady Margiana has told me, that she and her sister

fancied

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fancied themselves purposely brought forward by Henry to his view, with marks of approbation; but though they were both named to the stranger, they were suffered to remain ignorant who he was. Never, either before or after that day, did they behold him during their residence in London; but Lady Margiana's description of his person and deportment led me to conjecture who he *might* be.

"On my arrival at this place with your cousins, immediately after their father's death, my suspicions were proved to be well founded. They discovered the mysterious stranger to be their uncle; yet he took no notice of ever having previously seen them. And the subject of his visit at court continued a profound secret, till Henry himself, recalling it to his mind on this occasion, revealed it to me.

"The late Lord Widdrington had taken refuge here at the time it was paid. And, I grieve to say, his brother made the sacred name of loyalty a pretence for his attempt

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at furthering the worst designs; for they did not *then* proceed beyond an attempt.

"Making a merit with his Prince of betraying the place of his brother's concealment, he averred, that all natural affections gave way to the duty he held owing to the anointed sovereign of the land. But the noble-minded Henry, detesting his baseness, received his pretended homage with undisguised contempt; and, far from justifying his hopes, and gratifying his wicked ambition, even then gave indications of a disposition to forgive the offender. Would to Heaven he had, at that time, before further evil had occurred! but it is too late for wishes now. Lord Bertram returned; and you, Ethelred, fatally followed with your uncle's pardon, which too surely precipitated the event.

"The circumstances of your arrival and reception here, which you related to me soon afterwards, impressed me very deeply, though I was far enough, God knows! from surmising the truth. I believed only, that

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your uncle had been held in ignorance of the King's clement intentions, and had been suffered, if not induced, to run headlong to his ruin."

"Is this all, Harold?" said Delancey, mournfully. "If it is not, be speedy; for you break my mother's heart."

"I will pause here, then," replied Wallop. "The rest another time."

"No, no," said Lady Widdrington, half drowned in tears. "Go on, I pray you. Let us not hear a tale like this at twice. I expect something dreadful. The King, convinced of Bertram's guilt, gave orders—what were his orders?"

"Then I must, I will be brief, and not torture you with suspense. The Warden of the Tower, on the following day, received a command to bid the Earl prepare for death, unless he could clear himself of the hateful deed imputed to him by Sir Hugh Mortimer and Lord March. The same night he was found dead; the sinews cut of his wrists, knees, and ancles. The knife allowed him to

to eat with had been applied to this terrible purpose."

Lady Widdrington, as she sat, uttering an inarticulate sound, stretched out one trembling hand to her son, as she covered her pale visage with the other. Ethelred took it, pressed her head against his filial bosom, and mingled his tears with her's.

Wallop, thinking it right to leave them together, retired, his own manly heart wrung to the quick by the sense of their just and deep affliction.

For several succeeding days, Lady Widdrington denied herself the soothing society of her children and her friends, and confined herself wholly to her own apartment. A neighbouring priest, of a character very different from that of Father Geoffry, assisted her supplications to the throne of mercy for the repose of Bertram's guilty soul; and masses were said, by her desire, in

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in the chapels of Widdrington and Warkworth.

Margiana and Arlette respected the motives of her privacy too much, to wish to interrupt it. They frequently joined their devotions to those of Lord Delancey; and, ignorant as they were of the most afflicting circumstances of what had passed, they admired that goodness of heart which his profound sorrow for the loss of such a parent testified; a sorrow which, though Arlette could not participate in it, placed him in the most amiable point of view to her as well as Margiana.

"Wonder not at my affliction," said he to them. "My father was always a kind and partial parent to me; though to my sister his prejudices forbade him to be equally indulgent. His errors were those of ambition; and for whom is a father ambitious but for his children?"

Wallop,

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Wallop, not seeing Scruton, inquired of Ethelred what was become of him; and was glad to find he had been secured. "My melancholy mission is not yet completed," said he, "for I have an order to deliver to you concerning him. Your unhappy father, before he destroyed himself, wrote an accusation against that man, which was found after his death; and, agreeably to the request contained therein, it was laid before the sovereign. It was conceived in these few words:

'LET the King be informed, that a villain resides at Widdrington Tower, named Scruton, whose execution is an act of justice due to the law.'

"The King asked me if I knew the man? but I could say nothing as to his guilt. The order

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order I bring is, that his former life be inquired into, and that he suffer punishment, in case he be proved criminal. Do you believe him to have been concerned in the great offence we all deplore?"

Lord Delancey, instead of answering his friend, called for Kendrew, and desiring him to repeat to Wallop the particulars he had related to himself, he withdrew.

The consequence of the conversation that ensued was, that Wallop and the old servant went down together to the dungeon, where they found Scruton and his wife. Stubborn in guilt, they were both sullenly silent to Wallop's interrogations; till Joyce broke forth into loud revilings against the ungrateful family that rewarded their long and faithful services with ignominy and imprisonment.

Scruton, less bold than her, said, yet rudely said it, that he had never committed

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ted any offence, save by command of his Lord.

"But for what am *I* thus punished?" cried the woman, clamorous on account of her own sufferings, though she seemed feebly afflicted by those of her husband—"What have *I* done to be confined and treated like a malefactor? If that wretch took a bribe to do evil, must I be put to shame for his wickedness?"

"Why," said Wallop, "if you thought it wickedness, did you conceal it, and assist him in its execution? Though you armed him not with the dagger, did you not give your aid to hide its murderous effects? Knew you not he had slain the brother of your Lord? Knew you not your excellent Lady was privately suffering captivity and tortures, because she had declared her resolution to protect his orphan son? But why should breath be wasted thus! Our business, Scruton, is with you. Let repentance and confession, ere they be too late, atone for

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for the crime you have committed. Your Lord is not here to protect you; and the priest, less an offender than yourself, is fled."

To this Scruton returned no answer, for some time; but, at length, he again disclaimed all blame, and averred that he considered himself an innocent man, since it had not belonged to him either to dispute the will of his master, or to reveal his secrets. When, however, he was informed that master was gone to render up an account of all his actions, good and evil, to his Creator, and that he had died by his own hand, and when he was shewn by Wallop the writing he had left behind, to implicate his wretched agent, the expression of his features changed from sullenness to fury and despair. With shocking vehemence he uttered imprecations, that Wallop was obliged to use the sternest voice of authority to silence; and the miserable man, then suddenly admitting a hope that, by humility, he might deprecate the punishment he deserved,

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served, begged he might be allowed to relate all he knew.

He was suffered to proceed; but he had nothing to say that could extenuate his own guilt, and little that could add to that of Bertram. He declared, that Lord Widdrington had been doomed to destruction, even at the time of the difference between the brothers at Flint Castle, when the fatal blow was received, which never after was forgiven. Bertram had hoped that the King's resentment would have spared to his own hand the effusion of blood, innocent as to himself; but Henry's apprehended clemency, and Lord Widdrington's determination not to engage further in the rebellion, had unsheathed the private dagger against his life. His nephew's sudden arrival had urged the readiest means of concealing his murder. To remove the corpse from the chamber where it lay, was hazardous, and subject to detection; to inhume it beneath the pavement, was also insecure, for its decay might have betrayed the

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the fatal secret, and there was not time to bury it deep. It was determined, therefore, to wall up the two narrow entrances; and Joyce had assisted her husband in the task during the night, which was prolonged to Lord Delancey by a sleeping draught infused into his drink at supper.

But the escape of Kendrew held Bertram and his vile agents in painful and continual alarm. Ethelred, by his father's means, was long kept away from Widdrington Tower, lest he should meet with him, or discover the mystery of his mother's confinement; and Margiana and her sister had been strictly watched, from the same dread.

When the former was alarmed by the appearance of a stranger in her apartment, Bertram fancied it not Kendrew, because he did not suppose him possessed of a means of entering the castle, but Lady Widdrington herself, escaped, owing to the negligence of Geoffry, for a time from her

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her chamber; though the servile priest denied, and truly, the possibility of the fact. Wherefore, Margiana was more strictly confined at nights, but less so after her aunt had actually fled. For Bertram, who feared, while he was compelled to admire, the character of his niece, wished to keep on the best terms with her in his power.

He was anxious to hasten her marriage with his son, that if ever she became apprised of the manner of her father's death, she might be too closely allied to the family of his murderer to reveal the guilty story to the world. From a similar cause, Scruton declared, his Lord had resolved to bestow his daughter on Harold Wallop, whose penetration he dreaded. The will, by Bertram's directions, Scruton himself had forged, being the abler penman of the two.

Such was the substance of this man's communication, which Wallop afterwards repeated to his friend. The worthy priest was

was directed to use his exhortations to awaken the sinner to repentance, and time was allowed for the purpose; but Scruton was radically mean and ill-disposed; and having lived a violator of the laws of God and man, he died the death of a coward. His ignominious end was so private, as to be known only to the few acquainted with his crime; and his wife, though she admitted the justice of his execution, thought her own punishment too severe, in being confined within the walls of a religious house for the remainder of her days.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

A good Mother may be trusted.

Another ceremony yet remained to be performed, to satisfy the pious feelings of Lord Delancey; but this, though of a nature very different from the last, it was also necessary should be concealed from the world. The bones of his lamented uncle were lying irreverently covered with unhallowed sod, instead of being gathered to those of his forefathers; and the nephew, who, with even filial affection, mourned his fate, was anxious to render to them the proper honours of sepulture.

This

This could not be done without admitting another person to participate in that dreadful secret which loaded his heart; but, averse though he might be to have the knowledge of it extended, true religion in his bosom easily overcame the feelings of false shame.

At his next confession, Ethelred revealed the whole of the dismal tale to good Father Francis, the successor of Geoffry, who had before been ignorant of the name of Scruton's unfortunate victim; and a night was appointed for removing the precious remains of William Earl of Widdrington to their last and suitable home, the tomb of his ancestors. The faithful hands of Kendrew, whose attachment so long survived his Lord, prepared the "narrow house;" and himself, Lord Delancey, and Harold Wallop, with the priest, were all the attendants. No funereal pomp was there; but the sincerity of the hearts of the mourners supplied the place of ceremonial. Not

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even a single torch was hazarded, to create wonder or suspicion. The modest rays of the moon lighted the devout assistants across the park; and the deep shadow of the ivied arches pointed out the spot of their destination. The stillness of the lonely building, interrupted only by the waving of the lofty branches that surrounded it, added to the solemnity of the scene; and, calming the human mind to repose, inspired perhaps as true a sentiment of religion as ever was awakened by the pealing organ or the vocal choir. These were wanting to celebrate the present rites; but the prayers poured forth, as the remains of Lord Widdrington were lowered into the earth, were fervent, and the tears of three of his most faithful friends wetted his grave.

This last duty paid to his beloved uncle, Lord Delancey felt more at rest, and urged his mother to forego the solitude of her apartment, and restore herself to the society of those who loved her. She yielded to his

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his entreaties; and if mutual confidence and affection subsisting between five persons could alone have insured happiness, it must now have been found at Widdrington Tower.

The most truly contented person there was good old Kendrew. He rejoiced that all which human hands could do had been performed in honour of his master's memory, and he blessed God for having permitted him to survive all his sufferings, and station him for life in the service of Margiana, whom he almost adored, and near the persons of Lady Widdrington and her son, whom he equally respected and loved. Yet he could like, he said, that some degree of punishment should fall on Lady Rothes for her baseness towards Margiana, in causing her to be watched and seized, as soon as it was known that Lord Lothian hovered near her in disguise; and he frequently urged the justice of laying the whole of that Lady's proceedings before the King.

But Margiana on this subject was unpersuadable. "Not a step, worthy Kendrew," said she, "will I take against the woman whom my father loved, and the mother of that dear infant now gambolling before us. Had I stood in any danger of becoming Lord Lothian's wife, the measures his sister thought proper to take to prevent it would have been actually services done to me; and was it not likely for her to suppose that the uneasy confinement I suffered here, and which, no doubt, was known to her, might induce me to listen to his offers of liberty and love? But, granting she really injured me, by making me her prisoner for so many months, as indeed I was apt enough to think the case at the time, I will take a nobler revenge than lodging a complaint against her with the King. I will love and protect her boy, as if he was my own, so long as she will permit him to remain here with us."

Kendrew would shake his head at this, and

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and say it was fine talking; but that Lady Rothes, to feel hurt by her generosity, ought to have such a soul and such a spirit as her own, instead of the very reverse of both. But nevertheless, though he *was*, he hoped, a good Christian, he could not forbear a belief that Providence would ordain some retribution to overtake her before she died.

Not long after, intelligence was received of this once gay votary of courtly dissipation, which Kendrew knew not at first whether or not to consider as a fulfilment of his wishes. Lord Delancey had been several days absent upon business, near the borders of Scotland, where he had seen the young Earl of Rothes; and from him he had learned, that the Countess his mother was married again, with an additional circumstance which did not much surprise him, that the person on whom she had bestowed herself was an obscure man, far from young, and of very inferior birth. Lord Rothes, who had never been much beholden

to maternal cares, unless having been spoiled when he was a boy could be esteemed an obligation, appeared to think and speak of this event as a concern of very little moment, otherwise than as the meanness of the connexion cast a shade over the dignity of his house. But Lord Delancey thought him too light a character to feel much regret even from that consideration.

On his return to Widdrington Tower, he recollected the circumstance, and mentioned it, observing to Margiana, that her earnest wish never to be parted from little Hengist would probably be gratified, since other cares, and perhaps a younger family, might now be expected to claim Lady Rothes's future attention.

Hearing that her husband had been accustomed to move in an inferior walk of life, Margiana expressed her surprise that a woman who had been the object of her father's love could so far descend beneath her

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her former views and actual condition; but Lady Widdrington asked her wherein she thought Lady Rothes had been inconsistent?

Wallop inquired of Ethelred if he had heard the name of the person she had married?

"Her son did tell it me," replied he; "but I believe I have forgotten it." Then endeavouring to recal it to his recollection, "I am not certain," he added, "but I think it was Chaston."

Margiana repeated the name, and afterwards seemed to be searching her own memory. She continued to muse so long, that Ethelred asked her what engaged her thoughts?

"Nothing of moment," answered she. "I was only fancying I had at some time heard that name before."

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"Try if you can remember *when*," said Lady Widdrington, "and what you heard concerning it."

"I think it was my dear mother who once spoke it in my hearing. Relating the particulars of her cousin's marriage with the late Lord Rothes, if I do not mistake, she mentioned a youth of the name of Chaston, as one of her own two attendants who accompanied her when she quitted her father's house, and went to reside in Scotland."

"I feel assured you are right," said Lady Widdrington; "and if she behaves better to her second than she did to her first husband, who shall blame her choice?"

Old Kendrew was less charitably disposed. On being told the news, he declared he had hopes the time was now approaching when the bad woman who had seduced his dear Lord, and persecuted his daughter, would be made to repent of all her misdeeds.—"May the man she has chosen," cried he, "prove a tyrant, and lock her up in a cold cellar

cellar for a year and a half, as she locked up my precious young Lady! She might have been satisfied with the mischief she had done the family before."

"Do you profess Christianity, and yet talk thus?" said Lady Widdrington, smiling. "You ought to forget injuries."

"And so I would have forgotten this, and forgiven it too, Lady, had it been done to myself."

* * * * * *

The many serious concerns which of late had engaged Wallop's time and thoughts, and so strongly proved his friendship, and all the kind affections of his heart, had not weakened in his bosom the force of a softer sensation. Arlette was still very dear to him; and the great improvements which had taken place in her mind during the last two years even encreased his tenderness and esteem, while those of her person called forth additional admiration. But his passion for her, bearing the genuine character of real love, rendered him chiefly solicitous

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for the happiness of its object, and extremely apprehensive that her sentiments for him could never be made to partake of any other nature than that of sisterly regard. He recalled to mind, with infinite regret, the silent averseness she had shewn towards him, when her father had spoken of him to her as the man he intended for her future companion through life; and the recollection made him forbear either to address herself, or seek to interest her mother or Delancey in his favour, now that the parent was no more who would have enforced recommendation by authority.

Wallop's timidity, however, and diffidence of his own merits, led him into a mistake, the reverse of what a confident man would have been liable to; for he now appeared to the maturer judgment of Arlette very different from the Wallop she had undervalued before. She beheld him as he really was; and, with her consitutional frankness of heart, strove not to disguise her amend-

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ed opinion of him. But this very circumstance, which with many young men would have operate to inspire hope, produced the directly contrary effect upon Wallop.

"I see plainly," he would say to Ethelred, "that no time, no change, nor anything in my power to do, can ever make me find favour in your sister's eyes. She professes her good opinion of me *so* unreservedly, she treats me so exactly as she would do were I her brother, or even her little Maud, that I despair of her ever enduring me as a lover; and I cannot bear the thoughts of her being influenced to do what is disagreeable to her, either by your kind partiality for me, or the persuasions of Lady Widdrington."

"Nay, then," said Delancey once, in answer to an observation of this nature, "if you are so haughty and independent as to disdain our assistance, I am sure you must have more confidence of succeeding without it than you are willing to own. And

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methinks your complaints are grounded on so very weak a foundation, that you must utter them rather for the pleasure of seeing me smile at them as frivolous, than from any serious apprehensions you entertain. My sister, forsooth! has a good opinion of you, and treats you with familiarity, and undisguised regard! Truly, you are much to be pitied, and have a most dismal subject of lamentation! I warrant, if she shunned and appeared to dislike you, you would be full of hope!"

"Laugh as you please, Ethelred; but I can tell you, were I a good-looking fellow as you are, and any lady particularly avoided me, I should be apt to fancy myself a favourite with her; but what chance have I, with this hideous rough figure, ever to be suffered by a handsome girl to make love to her? I heard Lady Arlette, a little while ago, say to her cousin, purposely loud enough for me to hear her, 'What a pity it is poor Wallop cannot put his head where his heart is, and so hide it from us, while he presented

us

us with a sight of the other, which, I dare say, is the sightlier of the two! If he could but contrive to look a little like other people, one might endure to listen to him; but if I am listening ever so kindly, the moment I look at him, I feel disposed to scream and fly.' This, you will allow, is fine encouragement! Was I to talk to her of love, it is likely she would never give me an opportunity of scaring her away a second time."

"Indeed, Wallop, I thought you had more sense! If Arlette wishes your looks improved, is it not a sign she feels interested for you? Until you have spoken to her, what more would you have?"

"It is an easy thing to argue in other people's cases, Delancey. But pray, let me ask you, if, at the time you would have given your ears to have been beloved by Margiana, you did not feel the most hopeless of success when she professed a quiet, sedate, insipid friendship for you? I remember a case in point. She once said some-

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something to me in commendation of your open, cheerful aspect; and the peaceable, indifferent tone in which she delivered her observation, was the first thing that convinced me she never could bring herself to love you. But how now, Delancey? What means that alteration in your looks? What have I said to affect you?"

"Nothing worth noticing," replied Ethelred. "Let us change the subject."

"Ah, my friend, is it even so? Are you fated to be thus constant, even after hope is dead? Then I pity you indeed!"

"No, Harold, do not pity; reproach and blame me. Tell me I am ungrateful to the memory of Genevieve, and impious in still loving her sister—now, alas, *my* sister too! Yet, when you have done all this, I shall continue the same unhappy man you now behold me; for I can never, never cease to think of Margiana with a fondness that makes me wretched. When I reflect on the possibility of her marrying another, my heart dies within me, and, in despite of every

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every argument I can use with myself against my own feelings, I could welcome exile or death to avoid the torture of beholding it. But why do I say thus much, even to you? The subject has hurried me away. Forget every word I have uttered, my dear Wallop; forget, if possible, my folly, though I myself feel it to be incurable; and submit to it as a man yields to a disease that he is aware must shorten his life, and can only terminate with it."

Wallop was grieved, but knew not what to reply. He wished his friend could be insensibly led to form some other attachment; and to Lady Widdrington, to whose address and abilities he thought every thing possible, he ventured to hint his anxiety.

She immediately understood from what source it proceeded.—"I have indeed no doubt," said she, "that Margiana is still the only object of Ethelred's affections; and, in

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in my opinion, there is little probability of his ever becoming indifferent towards her; unless, indeed, he could be induced to love some other lady. I am seasonably furnished with the means of trying whether this can be done, which I have not yet communicated to him. To-morrow morning I will make use of it, and you shall witness the effect. It will perhaps enable me to guess at the state of more minds than one."

At breakfast, the following day, Wallop was prepared to see Lady Widdrington prove her experiment. She began by directing the subject of discourse towards her kindred at Alnwick Castle; and said, she rejoiced at the extreme good understanding that subsisted between the Earl of Northumberland and his daughter-in-law, Lady Percy, since it contributed to the comfort of each, and did equal credit to both. "The affliction," continued she, "that Lady Percy has undergone for the death of

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her gallant husband, has endeared her to the Earl, who loves her as his own child; and he has lately given me a convincing proof of his solicitude for her future happiness. I have not yet informed you, my dear Ethelred, that his messenger who was here last week brought a letter for me, containing a proposal, which I am desired, at some fit opportunity, to lay before you. It is a flattering one for you, and I am persuaded you will be inclined to give it all the attention it deserves." Lady Widdrington drew out the letter, and continued —" My Lord of Northumberland wishes that, at a due season, a treaty of marriage may be set on foot between you and Lady Percy; and, no doubt, all here must concur with me in desiring to promote so honourable an alliance. But read the Earl's letter yourself."

Lord Delancey sat at the upper part of the table, on the side opposite to his mother, and Margiana occupied the end between

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tween them. It was therefore natural that Lady Widdrington should give her the letter to pass it to her son. She did so, and raised her eyes to Margiana's countenance. It was paler than usual, and she avoided looking up. Lady Widdrington observed the motion of her hand as she delivered the paper to Delancey. It trembled, and Margiana seemed conscious of the tremour, by instantly resting it on the table. Ethelred read the letter to himself, but he did not chuse trusting his voice to make any observations upon it while Margiana was present. He feared betraying to her his continued love, and dreaded her contempt should she suspect it. He passed the letter in silence to Wallop, who, being asked his sentiments by Lady Widdrington, made answer, that such a connexion could only be thought of as desirable. Arlette said the same. Margiana spoke not a word, but took an early opportunity of quitting the hall; and, as soon as she was gone, Lady Widdrington asked her son what answer he advised

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advised her to return to her kinsman? "A grateful one, dear mother," replied Ethelred, abruptly, "for the honour he esteems me worthy of; but an absolute refusal let it be, for I would not marry Lady Percy to be made king of England. Sister, will you walk? I want to shew you something in the park." He went out with Arlette, and his mother and Harold were left alone.

"I expected this," said Lady Widdrington. "How determined he is!"

"And I fear will continue so," replied Wallop. "An attachment like his is interwoven with his frame, and has become a part of him."

"Is that the only remark you have to make, Harold? Did no circumstance respecting any other person at all engage your attention?"

"Yes; what I never thought to have beheld in this world—an emotion in Lady Margiana.

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Margiana. Surely she cannot be so unfortunate as now to have lost her insensibility, when love can be of no avail?"

"I would not wager much to the contrary," said Lady Widdrington, rising; "but I will go to her, and ask her opinion of this offered alliance. I have great hopes all will end favourably yet."

Lady Widdrington found Margiana in her chamber, busily employed at work; and she spoke in so cheerful a tone, that had not her maternal friend seen as well as heard her, she might have supposed her mind at ease. But it was plainly to be perceived she had been in tears, and that she endeavoured to conceal her eyes from notice.

There needed no more to convince Lady Widdrington of the state of her heart. She forbore, therefore, to distress her by any particular conversation; and soon after, leaving

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leaving her alone, she returned to the hall, where she was presently joined by her son and daughter.

The latter, too lively to be long inactive, left them in a short time; and Lady Widdrington interrupted the former as he was introducing indifferent subjects of discourse.—"Tell me, my dear Delancey," said she, "since you wish me to put a negative so decided on Lord Northumberland's proposal, by what motive am I to conclude you actuated? Have you resolved never to marry a second time, or are you so versatile as to be already again attached?"

"At present," replied Lord Delancey, "I have indeed no thoughts of marrying again."

"Am I then to suppose the other?"

"If you *think* me versatile, if you *think* me prone to indulge every new fancy—"

"Should I be less mistaken if I thought you

you indulging an old one, Ethelred? You do not answer me. You used not to be thus reserved with your best friend. What can I infer from the change, but that you harbour some thoughts of a nature that renders them painful to divulge?"

"Surely," replied he, "it does not follow, because I am averse to form a connexion with Lady Percy, that I wish for one with any other."

"It does not. Yet tell me, if you could now have any hopes of obtaining Margiana, would you not still persevere in your endeavours to win her hand?"

"My dearest mother, I know you are my best friend, and I will not have any reserves with you. I had rather die for Margiana, than live with any other woman. But of what avail is such discourse as this? I am now her brother; and before I was so, she repeatedly rejected me."

"Could you at this time offer to her, I am of opinion she would not refuse you again."

"I ought

"I ought not to wish it so. She would, in that case, be as unhappy as myself."

"You need not be unhappy, Delancey. You have only to exert yourself."

"And think you I have not exerted all that is left me of reason, and tried to argue myself out of a passion I would fain conceal from all the world?"

"And all without effect?" said Lady Widdrington.

Ethelred began to suspect his mother ridiculed him, and was silent.

"Good sense," pursued she, "will generally work wonders in cases of this nature; but since it is of no avail in your's, I know but of one other way which I can safely recommend to you, and I will now point it out. In former days you were accustomed to follow my advice, and to declare you never repented doing so. I offer it to you once more, and thus: Go into Scotland, to

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to Rothes Castle. Obtain admission there, on any pretence you please. The old servants are hospitable, and will make you welcome. Ask leave to be left alone to your devotions in the oriel chamber; and when there, remove a large crucifix, which stands at the upper end of it, on what appears a heavy block of wood. But this seeming block is hollow, and by a slight exertion you may lift off the top of it. It contains what will remove the unhappiness you complain of. Bring away with you whatever you find there, and replace the top of the block and the crucifix as you found them. This is all the advice I have to give you. Reflect on it to-day, and to-morrow pursue it, or not, as you chuse. Only remember this,—a good mother may be trusted."

Lady Widdrington now left her son, and avoided being alone with him the remainder of the day. He related what she had said

said to Harold Wallop, who urged him, by all means, to proceed as directed. And by the next morning's dawn, he set forward on an adventure, which, had it been suggested by any other person than his mother, he would have called idle and romantic.

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CHAP. IX.

An Oriel Chamber.

MARGIANA's mortification was deep, and her reflections very severe, when she reviewed her own feelings. A treacherous passion had crept into her heart before she was even aware of its approach; and with equal regret and surprise she discovered the image of Delancey there, not simply as that of a friend, but engrossing her thoughts, and softening them to a sentiment strange and new. Margiana, however, was not of a temper quietly to submit to the rule of that power she had hitherto held in subjection. Exerting

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ing her usual strength of mind, she determined that absence should wither what she was aware contention could not overcome; and revolving several plans for her future destination, she at length fixed on one, which oftener than once before she had looked forward to with satisfaction.

Notwithstanding the pain it gave her to think of quitting her dearest connexions, she hesitated not to endure it, when convinced of its necessity towards her peace; and two days after the departure of Lord Delancey, deaf to the insidious pleadings of her own heart, she communicated to Lady Widdrington her resolution of going to reside for a while with her former beloved mistress, Isabella of France. "Had not you, my dear aunt," said she, "been happy in the intercourse of your own amiable children, no consideration, I think, could have led my wishes to any place of abode remote from your's; but since their merits and society leave you

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nothing in this world to desire, I feel impelled to testify my remembrance of my late royal patroness, and my gratitude for all her past kindness, in the only way that is allowed me. Permit me, therefore, to leave you; and if I might so far trespass on your goodness as to beg that Hengist may be trusted to me,—in case you could spare him——"

"I could spare *him* much more easily than *you*, Margiana; and, to say the truth, I could not very well spare either of you. Neither do I think the scheme you mention is for your own advantage. A person should be influenced by very strong reasons indeed, before they desert their own nearest and natural friends; for to whom, after all, but to them, do any of us look up for comfort and assistance, when either is wanted? If you have no stronger one to urge than a desire of proving that you preserve a tender recollection of Queen Isabella, you are better where you are, than you can possibly be any where else. But perhaps you *have* other

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other reasons. If so, consider me as your mother, and be not afraid of naming them to me."

"I should not be afraid," replied Margiana, "of placing any confidence in you, that could either gratify you to receive, or be of any avail to myself to impart; but—" She hesitated, the words died on her lips, and she cast down her eyes in silence.

"But," said Lady Widdrington, with a smile, and continuing her sentence, "there may be secrets of the heart, which you cannot bear to reveal, even to the mother of Delancey." Margiana coloured a crimson hue. "Forgive me, dearest creature! I see your difficulties, I honour your motives, and am sensible of all your worth; but something you must do, in return for the love I bear you. Lay aside your project of leaving us, for one month only; and then, if you still wish to bereave us of one of our best blessings, you shall not be opposed."

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Margiana, confounded, yet melted, by such tenderness, submitted, though she could not help thinking that her aunt, if indeed she read the actual state of her heart, was deserted by her usual prudence and delicacy.

Ethelred, in the meantime, journeyed rapidly through the southern counties of Scotland; and, towards the approach of a stormy evening, finding himself, on inquiry, at the distance of about eleven miles from Rothes Castle, he purposely proceeded, that he might be furnished, by the surrounding darkness, with a plausible excuse for soliciting shelter there. He wished even for rain; but no rain fell. However, the wind was tempestuous, and the night was beginning to be obscure, when he reached the foot of the rock, and ascended the narrow path-way, forcing himself and his horse through the tangled briars. Old Murray, who appeared at the gate at his call, hearing he was a stranger who had lost his way, courteously entreated

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entreated him to abide in the castle for that night; and, as if afraid of a refusal, took his horse, and led it away, while he ordered another servant to conduct the traveller into the hall. There, soon after joining Lord Delancey, he begged him to consider himself at home, and would suffer no other attendant to bring in his supper, or serve him; assuring him, all the time, he had so won his heart, by his cheerful affability, that he should have his choice of all the sleeping-rooms in the castle. "I am on a sort of pilgrimage," said Ethelred, "which obliges me nightly to private devotion. If, therefore, you have an oriel chamber here, and could lodge me near——"

"You shall sleep in the very next apartment," interrupted the old man. "A door opens between them, and no mortal shall disturb you."

These promises were performed. Ethelred was no sooner left alone, than a powerful sentiment of curiosity led him into the

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oriel chamber, where he saw the large crucifix Lady Widdrington had mentioned. With a prayer to Heaven, that beneath it he might really find a termination of his anxiety, yet wondering how Margiana could be connected with anything there, he lifted it from the clumsy pedestal whereon it rested, and then, with some difficulty, removed the top of the latter. With a beating heart he examined the contents, and saw an old oaken box, so large as almost to fill the hollow space within the block. He took it out, and, opening it, found a parcel wrapt up in black cloth. This he secured; and having restored every thing else to its proper order, he hastened back to his own chamber; but there, to his extreme disappointment, he discovered the parcel was sealed up, and the impression he knew to be that of his mother's seal.

Great as was his impatience to know the nature of what he held, he recollected that he had only been enjoined to bring away what

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what he found beneath the crucifix; and would not destroy what he considered a sacred thing, but resolved to restrain himself till his return home. His emotion, however, effectually prevented his sleeping, and he was ready to depart at a very early hour the following morning, when he took a friendly leave of the kind old servant, and flew, in imagination, to the gates of Widdrington Tower.

His horse so well seconded his wishes, that his return was even more swift than the beginning of his journey had been; and Lady Widdrington so much compassionated his eagerness, that, on his arrival, hardly allowing his friends time to bid him welcome, she took him into her closet, where, breaking the seal of the parcel, she discovered to him a large assortment of papers. "These," said she, "are for your perusal; and I can readily conceive the joy with which they will be read. I will leave you

here with them, detaining you only while I relate how they came into my possession.

" During the early period of my residence at Rothes Castle, the principal female servant there was an aged woman, named Bertha, who had been nurse to Lady Alicia, and came with her into Scotland on her marriage. This woman met with an accident, that occasioned her instant death, as you have already learned from Margiana's story. But one particular circumstance connected with that accident, I now mention for the first time.

" Just before she lost her life, she had apparently been employed in sorting these letters, then the contents of the oaken box; for on going into her chamber afterwards, I observed it open on her table, with the papers scattered around; and some expressions written on one of them, that caught my eye as I was about to lock them up, forcibly arrested my attention, and I read them all.

" When

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"When I returned hither, I would not trust myself with them, lest their possession might tempt me to shew proofs of a fact I then saw no use in revealing; yet, in order to secure them, so as that their situation should be known only to myself, and yet that they might be accessible to any messenger, in case circumstances required their removal, I concealed them, leaving the cumbrous box unlocked, and using no other precaution than sealing them up.

"This is all I have to premise. When you have read and perfectly understood them, come to me. You will find me in my chamber."

Lady Widdrington left her son with these words, and, closing the door upon him, sent for Kendrew. When he came, she told him she had some questions of moment to ask him; and had a conference with the old man, which, after it had lasted some time, was interrupted by Lord Delancey's entrance, holding the papers in his hand.

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He appeared in extreme emotion, and his looks were even bewildered.

"Well, my dear Ethelred," said Lady Widdrington, taking his hand, "are you satisfied? Have I deceived you? Have I excited a false hope? Or are you now as free as formerly to address Margiana?"

"My senses are so confounded," replied he, "that I am unable to answer you. But it is not likely that Margiana should change with circumstances."

"Go, Kendrew," said Lady Widdrington, "invite my niece, Arlette, and Wallop, hither. Every mystery shall be explained in the united presence of them all; and henceforward, I trust, no more of these dark doings shall perplex us."

The old man flew, and immediately returned with them, having astonished them by the joyful wildness of his looks and voice. As soon as they appeared, Lady Widdrington, placing Margiana on a seat beside

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beside her, related to her the journey Lord Delancey had taken by her advice, its purpose, and the history of the oaken box and its contents. "I must now," continued she, "explain my motive for sending him thus far, for letters long ago addressed to Lady Rothes. It was, my dear Margiana, an inward conviction that his continued attachment to you, and a rising affection in your breast for him, were likely to embitter your future lives, since you were of opinion an obstacle existed of force to prevent your union. I knew no such obstacle did exist; and I refer you to those papers for a confirmation of what I say. You will examine their contents at your leisure; but, at present, as your anxiety and wonder must be considerably raised, I will relieve them by a brief account of the most extraordinary deception that perhaps ever was carried on for so many years."

Seeing Margiana was very much agitated —"I will not," pursued she, "teaze you by any further preface, but begin at once what

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what shall be a summary of the information Ethelred has just obtained from those letters.

"When Lady Rothes first came to reside in Scotland as a bride, she was attended by two domestics, who had been particularly in her own service; Bertha, formerly her nurse, and her page, Chaston, whom Kendrew says he well remembers a handsome youth, nearly of her own age. The present Lord Rothes was born about a year subsequent to her marriage; after which event, his father, the late Earl, was sent by the King of Scotland into Holland, to negociate some affairs of consequence with the ministers of the Spanish monarch. But these affairs were drawn out to such a length, that his absence lasted thirteen months; and, during that interval, all the circumstances were comprised that you are now, thus late, to learn. Lord Rothes had not left his Lady many weeks before she wrote a pressing invitation to *your* father, Margiana, to make a journey into Scotland, to see her; and

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and she sent it by this very Chaston. Unfortunately for himself, Lord Widdrington went. He resided a long while, in the quality of a kinsman, at and near Rothes Castle; and that attachment which had begun between them with honourable views, soon degenerated into a guilty connexion. Lady Rothes presently declared to your father, that the consequences were such as must expose her, if known, to a separation from her husband, who had been so long absent; and in her distress how to conceal her offence, and yet secure her infant from neglect, she, with the concurrence of her lover, adopted a most extraordinary resolution. She wrote an imploring letter to your excellent mother, whose mildness of temper and goodness of heart she thus dared to abuse; and, with well-affected penitence, confessed that one criminal moment had rendered her wretched for life. She owned her love for Lord Widdrington had overcome, for an instant, her sense of duty; yet pleaded not that love in extenuation of

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her fault. She supplicated your mother's pardon, and besought her, as she would imitate that Power who delights to forgive repentant sinners, to receive the hapless innocent, and dispose of it in England, where Lord Rothes might never learn its existence. This well-acted humility and contrition produced the effect that had been hoped for. Lord Widdrington, on his return to the country-house, where your mother then resided, found her as much disposed to lament as to blame her cousin, and not only willing but even anxious that the child should be sent.—'Yet, God forbid,' said she, 'that an infant, the offspring of my Widdrington, should be consigned to strangers. Its being your's, my dear Lord, is sufficient to make me consider it mine. Let it come, therefore, and it shall be reared as the younger sister of Margiana.' To Kendrew alone this angel-woman confided the secret. The rest of her household were deceived. In due time, Chaston and Bertha privately, and at night, brought the child;

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child; and it grew up as her own, bearing the name of Genevieve. Thus far Kendrew was acquainted, and has deposed towards the truth of this story; but a second part remained behind, which it was the consequence of Bertha's sudden fate to reveal, by exposing to my view a series of letters addressed to Lady Rothes by Chaston.

"From them it appears, that not long after her marriage, this abandoned woman conceived a passion for her handsome page. He was not backward to return it, and neither was of a temper long to deny indulgence to their love. It was an alarm occasioned by *this* base intimacy that induced Lady Rothes to invite her former admirer into Scotland. Chaston was poor and dependant, and she was swayed alike by the fear of detection and expence. She determined to insure to her child a nobler lot than by birth it was entitled to; and Lord Widdrington, when he consented to put his admirable wife's affection so strangely to the proof, little imagined he was himself deceived.

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ceived. Thus, Chaston, not he, was the real father of the infant; the date of whose birth he was made to believe seven weeks later than it really was. He died, as he had lived, in ignorance of this fact; and Kendrew himself has just declared to me, that till now, though he knew your reputed sister was not the daughter of Lady Widdrington, he did suppose her to be really your father's child.

"Long after the return of Earl Rothes from Holland, Chaston, it appears, became the tutor of his young Lord, whom in due time he attended to Edinburgh; and then that correspondence was begun, and carried on, through Bertha's means, between him and his worthless Lady; but for which this infamous deception might, perhaps, never have been discovered. The letters now before us often revert to its rise, and the whole of its progress—and, further, my beloved Margiana, they remove that bar which I hope and believe has for some time been the only obstacle remaining.

ing to prevent my son's union with the sole possessor of his heart. You are not his sister by marriage. You are free to receive his hand; and if his merits have at length created an interest in your affections, I have such an opinion of your good sense, as bids me hope you will not persevere in rejecting it."

Margiana was held silent many minutes, by a variety of contending emotions, some distressing and others soothing to her feelings—tender admiration of the conduct of her mother, who, she made no doubt, had consented to the deception, in hopes of recovering and securing her husband's love; shame, at that of her father; detestation of Lady Rothes's guilt; and joy at finding her own partiality for Delancey consistent with the purest innocence. She now recalled to mind several of her mother's expressions, when lying on her death-bed; in particular, the advice so strongly conveyed to Genevieve, to cultivate Lady Rothes's affection;

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fection; and the horror manifested by the latter at Edgehill, on the first suggestion of an attachment between her daughter and Lord Lothian, the present discovery fully accounted for.

Wallop and Arlette, in the meantime, were examining the letters so fortunately brought to light; and Ethelred, with a timid hope he feared too promptly to indulge, awaited Margiana's speaking, while his anxiety marked every feature.

Lady Widdrington again took his hand, and leading him to her niece—"He has endured much of late," said she, "and you will not further punish him with suspense, unless you experience any yourself. If, on the contrary, you mean to reward his long and faithful attachment, give him your hand now, and suffer us all to witness the action, as a token of your consent."

Margiana extended her hand; and De-

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lancey knelt at her feet, while he pressed it to his bosom.

"My dear Arlette," continued Lady Widdrington, "your happiness is no less an object of tender concern to me than your brother's, and the present moment gives me an opportunity of expressing my solicitude for it. I shall think it for ever secured in this world, if you acquiesce in a scheme that was once before proposed to you by your father,—I mean your union with one of the worthiest characters in existence, the friendly and deserving Harold Wallop."

"I am so delighted at Ethelred's felicity," replied Arlette, crying for joy, "that I can refuse no compliance with any wish of your's, my dear mother! And besides, now I am grown older and wiser than I was, I do not mind Wallop's not being handsome half so much as I used to do."

It is needles to expatiate on the happiness of Delancey and his friend. The excellent Lady

Lady Widdrington and the overjoyed Kendrew shared it all; and their marriages proved as fortunate in the event as they were bright in prospect. The prejudices and the indifference of Margiana were completely overcome; and after she had been long a wife, while Lady Rothes was withering under the united evils of penury and a mean husband's moroseness, she often said in wonder to her mother-in-law and Arlette, "Why was I so long afraid of trusting my happiness to your Ethelred, since he has every virtue of which human nature is capable, and hardly a fault to place in balance against them?"

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